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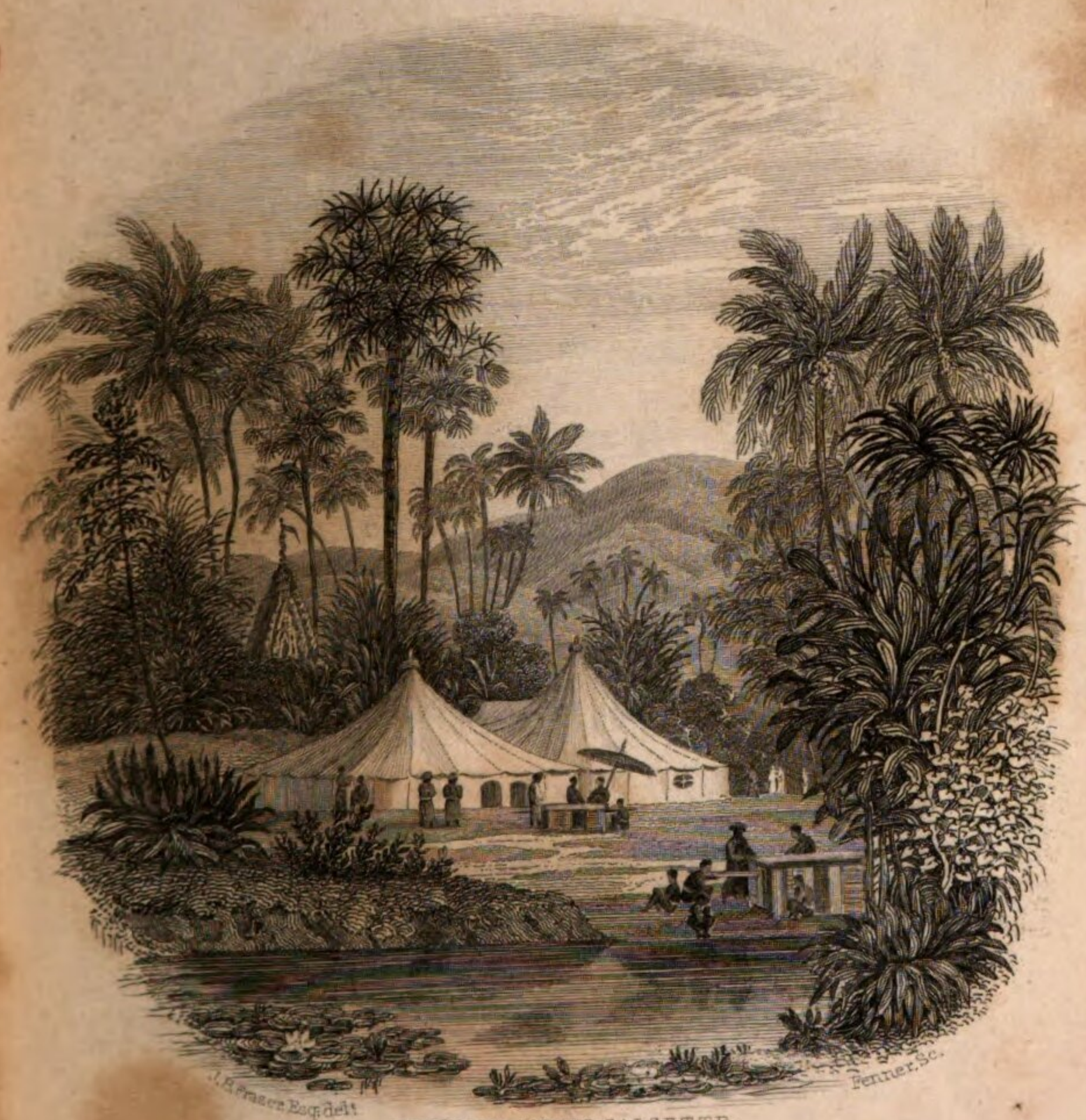
J. Scott



FRAGMENTS
OF
VOYAGES & TRAVELS
BY
CAP^{TN} BASIL HALL, R.N.

SECOND SERIES

VOL. I.



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FRAGMENT

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FRAGMENTS

William Ramsay

OF

VOYAGES AND TRAVELS.

BY CAPTAIN BASIL HALL, R.N.

F.R.S.

Second Series.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

ROBERT CADELL, EDINBURGH;

WHITTAKER, TREACHER, & CO. LONDON.

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FRAGMENTS

VOYAGES AND TRAVELS

BY CAPTAIN WILLIAM B. R.

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ROBERT CADELL, EDINBURGH

PREFACE.

IN the First Series of these Fragments, I addressed myself chiefly to young persons ; and, in like manner, my principal object in this continuation is to engage the attention of those who, from having entered the service in less stirring times than I passed through, may, perhaps, have found it more difficult to gain experience for themselves.

I have likewise ventured to introduce some odds and ends of technical information which seemed calculated to interest or to amuse other people not directly connected with the sea.

London, March 1832.

PREFACE

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In the First Series of these Publications, I addressed myself chiefly to young persons, and, in like manner, my principal object in this continuation is to engage the attention of those who, from having entered the service in the young time, have a natural thirst for knowledge, and are more desirous to gain experience in the various duties of the service, than to acquire the theoretical principles of the art. I have therefore ventured to introduce a new kind of technical information, which seemed calculated to interest or to amuse other people not directly connected with the art.

London, Nov. 1832.

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FRAGMENTS
OF
VOYAGES AND TRAVELS.

Second Series.

CHAPTER I.

TAKING A LINE IN THE SERVICE.

THAT there is a tide in the affairs of men, has very naturally become a figure of frequent and almost hackneyed use in the cockpits, gun-rooms, and even the captains' cabins of His Majesty's ships and vessels of war. Like its numerous brethren of common-places, it will be found, perhaps, but of small application to the real business of life; though it answers capitally to wind up a regular grumble at the unexpected success of a junior messmate possessed of higher

interest or abilities, and helps to contrast the growler's own hard fate with the good luck of those about him.

Still, the metaphor may have its grateful uses ; for certainly in the Navy—and I suppose elsewhere—there is a period in the early stages of every man's professional life at which it is necessary that he should, more or less decidedly, ' take his line,' in order best to profit by the tide when the flood begins to make. It is surely as valuable a secret in the conduct of life as in the practice of navigation, to discover the exact moment for tripping the anchor and sheeting home the topsails ; and although sea moralists will differ on the one point, as sea pilots differ on the other, all must agree that there is much advantage in knowing distinctly beforehand what we intend to aim at, not only in the first start, but during the subsequent conduct of the voyage. It is not enough to have the wind and tide in our favour—we must also possess the art of availing ourselves of them—lest, by going too fast when the breeze is favourable, we take the ground upon

some of those numerous sunken shoals which even our good fortune itself so often scatters in our course. How frequently, for example, at daybreak, after a night of the fairest possible wind, at the very height of the spring tides, may we not see, along the banks of some mighty stream—the sacred Ganges, or the silver Thames—a fringe of richly-freighted argosies, all stranded—not for want of able mariners, or experienced pilots, but from too intemperate and heedless a use of the good things within their reach, and from the consequent absence of that vigilance and energy which, had the gale and stream been adverse, they must have been stimulated to exercise in order to advance at all.

It is difficult, I confess, to translate these ancient saws and metaphors into practice, or to say exactly at what stage of a young officer's career the determination to adopt any one of the numerous lines before him should be taken: but there can be little doubt as to the utility of that determination being made early in life. In most cases, it is clearly beyond the reach of artificial systems of discipline, to

place, on a pair of young shoulders, the reflecting head-piece of age and experience ; neither, perhaps, would such an incongruity be desirable. But it seems quite within the compass of a conscientious and diligent commanding officer's power — and surely it forms an important part of his duty — by every means to cultivate the taste, and strengthen the principles and the understanding of the persons committed, for a season, to his charge. His constant endeavour should be, to train the thoughts of those young men who have not yet learned to reason entirely for themselves, in such a manner that, when the moment for independent reflection and action arrives, their judgment and feelings may be ready to carry them forward in the right path. It will, in most cases, be too much to expect that the benefit of such instruction shall be distinctly perceived by the objects of all this solicitude ; but there can be nothing unreasonable in supposing that such training may often contribute to assist their abstract virtuous intentions. It may teach them the habit, for instance, of discover-

ing that, in practice, there is a positive, and generally a speedy pleasure and reward attendant on almost every exercise of self-denial. When that point is once firmly established in the mind of a young man, it becomes less difficult to persuade him to relinquish, at all times, and pretty much as a matter of course, whatever is merely agreeable to him at the moment, if it stand in the way of the stern claims of more laborious duty.

Although the period must vary a good deal, I should be disposed to say, that, in general, a year or two after an officer is promoted to the rank of lieutenant, may be about the time when he ought fairly and finally to brace himself up to follow a particular line, and resolve, ever afterwards, manfully to persevere in it. His abilities and industry will thus have the best chance for effect, in consequence of being concentrated on some definite set of objects — and his friends, both on shore and afloat, will be furnished with some tangible means of judging of his capacity. Without such knowledge, their patronage is likely to do themselves no

credit, and their protégé very little, if any, real service.

Some young fellows set out in their professional life by making themselves, as they suppose, thorough-bred sailors, merely by aping the broadest external features in the character of the foremast-men. These ‘kiddy blades,’ or ‘tarpaulin men,’ as they are called in the cockpit slang, have their hands constantly in the tar-bucket — their fingers are cut across with the marks of the ropes they have been pulling and hauling — and their whole soul is wrapped up in the intricate science of cutting out sails, and of rigging the masts and yards. Their dreams are of cringles and reef-tackles, of knots, splices, grummets, and dead eyes. They can tell the length, to a fathom, of every rope in the boatswain’s warrant, from the flying jib downhaul to the spanker sheet; and the height of every spar from the main-top-gallant truck to the heel of the lower mast. Their delight is in stowing the hold; dragging about kentlage is their joy; and to form a good bend in the cable tier, without calling for a stand-

fast at the capstan, is their great pride. In harbour they are eternally paddling in the boats, rowing, or sculling, or sailing about—and are always the first in fishing or bathing parties—in short, they are for ever at some sailor-kind of work. At sea, their darling music is the loud whistle of the hardest storm-stay-sail breeze, with an occasional accompaniment of a split main-top-sail. ‘The harder it blows, and the faster she goes,’ the merrier are they; ‘strong gales and squally’ is the item they love best to chalk on the log-board; and even when the oldest top-men begin to hesitate about lying out on the yard to gather in the flapping remnants of the torn canvass, these gallant youngsters glory in the opportunity of setting an example of what a gentleman sailor can perform. So, at it they go, utterly reckless of consequences; and by sliding down the lift, or scrambling out, monkey fashion, to the yard-arm, where they sit laughing—at the risk of their lives—though the spar be more than half sprung through—they accomplish their purpose of shaming the others into greater exertions. It is well

known that one of the ablest, if not the very ablest, of the distinguished men whom the penetrating sagacity of Nelson discovered and brought forward, owed his first introduction to the notice of that wonderful commander by an exploit of this very description.

These are the dashing boys who cut out privateers, jump overboard after men who cannot swim, and who, when the ship is on fire, care not a farthing for the smoke and heat, but dive below with the engine-pipe in their hands, and either do good service, or perish in the flames with a jolly huzza on their lips. Such may fairly be called the muscular parts of our body nautical, for there is no gummy flesh about them ; and when handled with skill, they form stout instruments which help essentially to win such battles as the Nile and Trafalgar. They constitute a very curious and important class between the high-caste officer in talents and education, and the mere jack tar, who is, and ought to be, pretty nearly a machine.

The young persons I have just been describing are, however, by no means

servile imitators of the sailors;—they possess much useful technical knowledge, as well as mere energy of character—and often both think and act with originality—yet they are docile to the last degree, and delight in nothing more than fulfilling, to the very letter, the orders of their superiors. They amuse themselves, as I have mentioned before, by affecting the gait, the dress, and the lingo of the men before the mast; and are at times supposed to be a little too familiar with these models, on whom they pretend to shape their manners; but still they never carry the joke so far as to become what is called ‘Jack and Tom,’ even with the leading men in the ship. They can sing, upon occasion, snatches of forecastle ditties, or fling off a hornpipe worthy of the merriest cracked fiddle that ever sounded under the bow of a drunken musician amongst a company of well-painted doxies, half-seas over, at the back of Point Beach. Not content with wearing, according to the directions in the song,

“ Their long-quartered shoes, check shirt, and blue jacket,”

they will even thrust into their cheek a quid of tobacco (though detesting it from their souls), merely to gain the credit—such as it is—of ‘chewing backy like a sailor.’

The people—especially the old hands of the crew—are generally much amused with the dandyism of these spirited young bucks, whom they never fail to treat with all possible respect—so long as the lads duly respect themselves, and so long as they take the greatest care to enact nothing in their character of jolly tarpaulins which shall be really inconsistent with their proper calling of officers and gentlemen.

Of course, there must be a limit in age and in rank to the indulgence of these fancies; and if even an elder midshipman or a mate of the decks were permanently to distinguish himself after this masquerade fashion, he would speedily lose the personal respect of the crew towards himself, besides forfeiting much of the consequence which it is his duty to keep up for the station, and, of course, weakening one of the most efficient sinews of discipline.

It becomes, then, absolutely necessary that, sooner or later, these youths should make up their minds either to reform their habits altogether, or hit upon such a modification of them as shall be consistent with their new station, and suitable to the more extended views which their elevation commands. When a mid, for example, is promoted to lieutenant, he must speedily decide whether he shall follow up in earnest a course of strictly seamanlike objects, of which the mere outward show had previously captivated his young fancy ; or he must enter into some compromise with himself, and relinquish a part of his exclusive regard for these pursuits, in consideration of others less fascinating, to be sure, but more likely to bear on his advancement ; for, without some knowledge of many other things, his chance must be very small in the race of professional life.

In tolerably wide opposition of habits to these tarpaulin men follow the less dashing and shewy race sometimes called ‘star-gazers,’ sometimes ‘dictionary men,’ who are also occasionally taunted or dignified by their messmates with the title

of ‘ philosophers.’ The happiness of this class lies in the nautical, scientific, diplomatic, and literary departments of our multifarious profession, even the ordinary duties of which branches afford a wide and diversified field for exertion, and furnish occupation for an immense number of very differently-constructed heads and hands. The theory of navigation—including the serene delights of practical astronomy—the mathematical principles of seamanship, ship-building, and gunnery—together with the complicated and difficult art of surveying coasts, form the chief objects which engage their attention. The knotty topic of discipline, too, perhaps among the most difficult of sciences, by furnishing occupation for many of these persons who are as yet incompetent to grapple with it, gives birth to an infinite deal of nonsense. The object of most of these young philosophisers is to get at the reason of all things, and to be able not only to work by the rules laid down for them in printed books, or in the written orders of their superiors, but to investigate the foundation of these rules and regulations so thoroughly, that

when new cases occur they may have it in their power to meet them by fresh resources of their own.

Unquestionably all this is very useful ; but it may be overdone—and very often it is so. Yet there is no denying that the mere circumstance of understanding the rationale even of the most ordinary subjects, has a wholesome influence on the mind, provided too much time be not expended upon its abstract investigation. Compared with the inert kind of mole-like blindness which characterises the operations of those who work by ‘rule of thumb,’ in total theoretical ignorance of what they are about, this sort of knowledge has a decided advantage in practice. In the naval profession, at least, there may always be observed a wonderful difference between the manner in which two persons of equal abilities execute the same task, when one of them sees his way clearly by the light of science, and is trained in the habit of thinking for himself, while the other proceeds under the guidance of downright experience alone—with no lights but such as are reflected from the

facts embraced by his own limited knowledge. It is only when the two go together that the highest services are performed. True science, it may be remarked, consists of the condensed experience of ages of observation ‘curdled into one hour.’ But, unless there exist a certain degree of personal familiarity with the subject, the application to practice can rarely be made with safety. The profoundest mathematician—the La Place or Herschel of the day—would probably find their integral calculus avail them little in taking a common lunar at sea in roughish weather; but, on the other hand, without that mighty calculus, the expertest manipulations of practical men would go for nothing. The great high priests of science, indeed, are not slow to acknowledge, in their turn, the obligations which they lie under to those industrious but unlearned observers who scatter themselves over the surface of the globe, and, armed with the borrowed results of the mathematician’s knowledge, search far and wide for new co-efficients or elements upon which still more extensive gene-

realisations may, in due time, and in far different hands, be made to rest. What, for example, would the sublime theory of the tides be worth, if deprived of the data furnished by mere sailors? Even those wonderful and refined speculations relating to the velocity of light and the production of colours by the interference of the different rays, have derived one of their most popular illustrations from a purely nautical observation of the ebb and flow of the sea at Batsham in Tonquin.

In the multitude of occupations to which naval men are daily called, and the still greater variety to which they may possibly be called, it is utterly impossible they can give adequate attention to each, so as to acquire any thing approaching to profound knowledge respecting more than a very few topics. Still, there can be little doubt that the habit above alluded to, of investigating every thing, more or less deeply, for one's self, and familiarising the young mind to the prompt creation of resources, and their immediate application to practice, cannot fail to render an officer more useful as a public servant than if he con-

tented himself with acquiring a bare knowledge of the rules alone. On the other hand, as most young men are but too ready to think for themselves, and to despise all authority, it requires some care to prevent their running a little too fast. Fortunately, however, there is a very important, and, it may be called, in certain respects, a peculiar feature in the naval profession, which generally acts as a salutary check on this inherent presumption of our nature. Theory and practice with us always go hand in hand—we are never off duty—we are constantly engaged in real work—a routine of actual business must be gone through—but as this routine is for ever liable to be interfered with by the diversified nature of the elements with which we have to contend, our hands and heads are so invariably and so completely filled with real occupation, that we have very little time for idle speculation. It requires merely a proper share of attention on the part of the commanding officer, at the fitting moment, to give a right impulse to these inquiries. Since, however, the true charm of mixing

up theoretical speculations with actual practice can be well understood only when the two go together, we must watch for the occurrence of those moments when the young men have themselves just discovered their want of knowledge, and are smarting under the humiliating penalties of ignorance. Then, and perhaps only then, if we can 'catch them on the wheel,' as sportsmen say, will they be truly grateful to us for our communications.

It takes nothing from the value of this course of mixed practice and theoretical investigation, to shew these students that they are still very far—even hopelessly far—from the highest walks of scientific knowledge, and that every fresh step they gain will only contribute to extend the horizon of their ignorance. On the contrary, this very conviction, arrived at in a legitimate way, does great good, by teaching young men to distrust themselves and their own unaided resources, without in the least degree weakening their reliance on those faculties of their own minds which they have actually put to the test and not found wanting. If, in short, they be men of the

true stamp, and a laudable ambition excites them to persevere, they will soon come to possess an immense mass of scientific and professional information, highly delightful to themselves, and eventually useful to their country. But as they cannot by possibility find time to study thoroughly one hundredth part of these things, they must be content to acquire the power of using the greater portion of all such knowledge by proxy, as it were, in right of a well-grounded faith in those high and constituted authorities by whom the whole has been rigorously investigated and established, and by whom the results have been fitted for common use ; or, to adopt the impertinent phrase of the school-books, are reduced to the meanest capacity.

Out of the class of officers now alluded to, the growth of which it has been the wise policy of late years to encourage, there have sprung up the numberless voyagers, surveyors, and other strictly nautical men—who are always to be found when the public service requires a practical question to be settled, or a professional office of responsibility and trust to be filled

up. If the arctic circle is to be investigated by sea or by land, or the deserts of Africa traversed, or the world circumnavigated afresh, under the guidance of the modern improvements in navigation, the government at once calls upon such men as Parry, Franklin, Clapperton, Beechey, to whom they can safely intrust the task, with the certainty of its being as completely executed as the nature of things will admit of. Again: if a person who unites first-rate scientific attainments with extensive experience be required to arrange and methodise, and so turn to practical account, for the general benefit of the country, the result of these and ten hundred other similar though less brilliant services, in past and present years, the Admiralty, without seeking beyond the profession, lay their hands at once upon a competent hydrographer, and, through the skill and diligence of such an authority as Beaufort, insure not only the fidelity of their numerous charts and other nautical works (now placed at the free disposal of the public), but also give the country an assurance that all those energetic officers

who are employed afloat in extending and in perfecting our knowledge of almost every part of the navigable world, are judiciously distributed.

From the same class, also, a valuable race of naval statesmen have been drawn. For a considerable number of years, the whole of the diplomatic duties of South America, as far as concerned the interests of England, were carried on by the naval commanders-in-chief. Who can forget how important a share of Lord Nelson's command, or, after him, of Lord Collingwood's, in the Mediterranean, consisted of duties of a purely civil description? And it may be questioned if diplomatic history offers a more masterly specimen of address and statesman-like decision, as well as forethought, than was displayed by Captain Maitland, in securing the person of Buonaparte, not only without committing himself or his government, but without wounding the feelings of the fallen warrior. The case was, and ever must remain, unique; and yet the most deliberate reflection, even after the event, has not suggested any thing to wish

changed. Fortunate, indeed, was it for the reputation of this country that the delicate task fell to the lot of an officer possessed of such inherent vigour of character, and one so familiar with the practical exercise of his own resources, that difficulties which might have staggered ordinary minds vanished before his.

In so extensive a service as the Navy, accident might perhaps occasionally produce such men as have been named above; but it is very material to observe, that unless there existed, as a permanent body, a large class in the Navy, who follow the pursuits alluded to from taste as well as from motives of public spirit, and from whose ranks selections can be made with confidence at moments of need, such opportunities as those above alluded to might often be allowed to pass unprofitably. It is, moreover, important to recollect, that it is in these matters as in every thing else—where there is a great demand, and consequently a great supply, there will from time to time start up a master-spirit—such as that of my lamented friend, the late Captain Henry Foster—to claim, even in

the very outset of his career, the cheerful homage of all the rest. So far from the profession envying his early success, or being disturbed at his pre-eminent renown, they felt that such well-earned honours only shed lustre on themselves.

It is also very pleasing to observe the reciprocal feeling which belongs on such occasions to all rightly constituted minds. When Captain Foster, in 1828, then only lieutenant, received the Copley medal, the highest scientific honour in the gift of the Royal Society, it never occurred to him merely to hang it at his breast in solitary dignity, or to chuckle presumptuously at his own particular good fortune. So far from this, he thought only of the service; and proceeding straight to the Admiralty, he shewed the medal, and declared modestly, but firmly, to their lordships, that he considered the honour only nominally bestowed upon himself, but essentially conferred upon the naval profession at large. This generous and manly appeal could not fail to make its due impression; and, within the same hour, his commission, as commander, was signed,

his appointment to a ship ordered, and a voyage of scientific research carved out for him.

I need not say how bitter a grief it is to those who were personally acquainted with this rising young officer, to think that so much knowledge—such useful talents—such unmatched zeal and industry—and such true love for science—all so fertile in promises of future service and renown—should have been lamentably quenched in a moment!

Besides the regular-built sailors, and these salt-water statesmen and philosophers, there is yet another set which greatly outnumbers both, and which, if comparisons must be made, equals, if it does not far exceed them in utility. I allude to that large and very important body of strictly professional persons who are not remarkable for any thing in particular, unless it be for a hearty and uncompromising devotion to the service. These hardy public servants work on from day to day, doing their duty steadily and well, and labouring with more or less efficiency in proportion to their several

capacities, and with despondency or cheerfulness according to their respective temperaments, and the circumstances in which they happen to be placed. Yet, Captains, it is to be feared, are generally too apt to consider these meritorious persons as less entitled to attention than their more shewy companions; just as schoolmasters are, not unnaturally, disposed to devote most of their time to the cleverest boys, to the comparative neglect of those who cluster round the point of mediocrity. It may, however, be easily conceived that the persons least attended to, afloat as well as on shore, often stand more in need of notice and assistance than their gifted brethren, who are better able to make their own consequence felt and acknowledged. For it must not be forgotten, that these honest, hard-working men actually perform the greater part of all the routine drudgery of the service, and, what is more, they perhaps execute it, upon the whole, better than men of higher talents could do in their places. At all events, although they perform every thing required of them, they gain no dis-

inction, and it is obvious that they never can gain any—their very numbers, and the common-place, every-day nature of their duties, render distinction out of the question. This is not their fault; neither, in strictness, can it be called their misfortune; it is their inevitable fate, which it is no more possible to alter than to add one cubit to their stature.

On the other hand, they themselves may do well to recollect, that distinction is not necessarily happiness. Beauty in a woman, and talents in a man, often prove deeper sources of evil than attend mediocrity in either of these gifts. Nor does observation teach us to suppose that there is less contentment amongst this class of officers, than may be found amongst those whose knowledge and powers prompt them to aspire to rivalry with the grand leaders of the profession.

Commanding officers should always bear in mind, that these praiseworthy individuals, though remarkable for nothing, and sufficiently aware of their unpretending and humble place in the scale of public estimation, are not the less sensible

that, so long as they do their duty, they are entitled to a proper share of favour; and they will seldom continue to work well if this scanty and hard-earned meed be withheld. It should also be remembered, that while these persons occupy the trying and delicate situation of men who are conscious that the rest of the world cannot afford time to consider their feelings or their interests, they are not on that account less alive to kindness and fair dealing than those whose career has been more brilliant. Every commanding officer may therefore be said to hold in his hands the ready means of securing the good-will of a large majority of those by whom he is surrounded. At the cost of little or no sacrifice on his own part—it may even be that the notice he bestows on them will prove one of high satisfaction as well as profit to himself—he can command the strenuous support of those people whose exertions it is the chief end of his discipline to concentrate and direct to one common purpose.

The class amongst us who devote themselves to sober literary pursuits is neces-

sarily very small ; but that of the happy youths, who dream the gods have made them poetical, has many members who ‘ rave, recite, and madden round the ship,’ to their own (exclusive) satisfaction. Others there are who deal desperately in the fine arts of painting and music,—that is, who draw out of perspective, and play out of tune. Their poor messmates can answer for little respecting these future Rembrandts and Paganinis, except that they certainly hide not their lights under a bushel ; and that the happiness of the mess would be considerably improved if authority were given to pitch every sketch-book and every flute out at the stern-port—followed, of course, by their owners !

Finally come the raking, good-looking, shore-going, company hunting, gallivanting, riff-raff set of reckless youths, who, having got rid of the entanglement of parents and guardians, and having no great entanglement of principle or any thing else to check them, seem to hold that His Majesty’s service is merely a convenience for their especial use, and His Majesty’s ships a sort of packet-boats to

carry their elegant persons from port to port, in search of fresh conquests, and, as they suppose, fresh laurels to their country.

Few men, it must be remembered, do any thing well which they do not themselves sincerely like; and, for the same reason, if an officer be capable of performing services really valuable, his success must arise from turning his chief attention to those branches of the profession which he feels are the most congenial to his peculiar taste, and which experience has shewn lie within the range of his capacity. Some officers not only reason about this matter, but deliberately act upon it, while the greater number, as may be supposed, adopt their line unconsciously. Still, it is the bounden duty of every well-wisher to the service to use the influence he possesses (and there are very few indeed who do not possess some share of influence, direct or indirect), to lead the young persons about him to follow the true bent of their genius, and to select as a principal object of study the particular branch of the profession in which

they are most likely to benefit themselves permanently, because that must always prove the very same thing as benefiting their country.

I well remember, in my own case, the day, and almost the very hour, when these convictions flashed upon my mind. I then saw, for the first time, that unless I speedily roused myself and 'took my line' vigorously, the proper occasion might swiftly pass away. I was quite astonished how, up to that moment, I had seen so little of what now appeared so very palpable; every other consideration was instantly dismissed—and all minor vanities being shaken like dew-drops to the air, I set resolutely about the attainment of my promotion—the grand object of every officer's ambition.

Before describing how this important affair was put in train, I shall attempt a sketch of the kind of life I was leading about this period. In looking back to those days, and glancing the mind's eye along the intermediate years, I sometimes ask myself whether or not I should act very differently if permitted to make the voyage

over again, under the guidance of experience bought by the practice of life. The retrospect, of course, offers some unavailing regrets ; but still I can hardly believe that the result would, on the whole, have proved materially happier for myself.

Such being the case, I trust there is no unpardonable egotism in mentioning, in a work intended for young people, that one of my chief motives for bringing these Fragments of my life and adventures before them, is the hope of imparting to others, similarly circumstanced, a portion of that spirit of cheerfulness, and determination to make the most of things, which, after thirty years of activity and enjoyment in foreign climes, have landed me in perfect contentment at home.

CHAPTER II.

A SAILOR ON SHORE.

It is a far easier thing to get into a house in Ireland than to get out of it again ; for there is an attractive and retentive witchery about the hospitality of the natives which has no match, as far as I have seen, any where else in the wide world. In other places the people are hospitable or kind to a stranger, as the case may be, or as the guest seems to want assistance : but in Ireland the affair is reduced to a sort of science, and a web of attentions is flung round the visitor before he well knows where he is. So that if he be not a very cold-blooded, or a very clear-sighted, or a very temperate man, it will cost him sundry headaches—and mayhap some touches of the heartache—before he wins his way back again to his wonted tranquillity.

I had not a single acquaintance in Ireland when first I visited that most inte-

resting of countries, of which few people in England know much—even though their imaginations have been so powerfully aided by the delicious pencil of Miss Edgeworth. Before leaving it, however, after about a year and a half's cruising off and on their coasts, I was on pretty intimate terms with one family at least for every dozen miles, from Downpatrick on the east, to the Bloody Foreland on the west, a range of more than a hundred and twenty miles.

The way in which this was brought about is sufficiently characteristic of the country. I had inherited a taste for geology; and as the north of Ireland affords a fine field for the exercise of the hammer, I soon made myself acquainted with the Giant's Causeway, and the other wonders of that singular district. While engaged in these pursuits, I fell in with an eminent medical practitioner resident in that part of the country—a gentleman well known to the scientific world as one of the best-informed geologists and most accomplished philosophers of the day. What was more to my present purpose, he was still better

known on the spot as the most benevolent and kindest of men. In no part of the globe have I made a more agreeable, or useful acquaintance. During a residence of a week under the roof of this delightful person, I observed that he frequently changed the conversation from literary, professional, or scientific topics, to urge me to make acquaintance with some friends of his, living also in the north of Ireland, but at the opposite angle. He was, in particular, desirous that I should see a family with whom he described himself as being very intimate, and who were then on a visit far in the west. I was nothing loath, as may be supposed; indeed, a young lieutenant is seldom burdened with many misgivings as to his reception any where — (except within the precincts of the awful Admiralty!) — and I, naturally, felt a vehement curiosity to see something more of the manners and customs of a country, of whose public proceedings, it is to be regretted, the world knows so much more than of their domestic life.

Besides these motives, I was influenced by the extreme earnestness of my worthy

friend, who, indeed, would hardly let me stir from his house until I had promised to deliver, with my own hands, a letter of introduction to a lady residing in the part of the country above alluded to, and who, he assured me, would not only be most happy to see me herself, but also to introduce me to the family with whom she herself was then living as a guest. I thought it rather an odd arrangement, that a mere guest should introduce a stranger to another person's house: but I had already seen enough of the hearty hospitality of Ireland not to wonder at any thing having a kind purpose in view. I therefore promised that, if at any time I could obtain leave of absence for a few days, the introductory letter should be delivered.

I did not discover, until long afterwards, the secret motive of my friend's anxiety that I should pay the visit in question, though, at the time alluded to, I was quite coxcomb enough to suppose that it all arose from personal considerations. It mattered little to me, however, to what the kindness was due; and, my leave having expired, I set off to my ship, the

Endymion, of which I was then second lieutenant, with a firm resolution to avail myself of the first opportunity of visiting the persons to whom my excellent friend the Doctor had given me an introduction. I had been so frequently absent before, that I expected to be fixed on board for a long time to come, and was therefore agreeably disappointed to discover that my brother-officers had formed so many pleasant acquaintances at Burncrana—a town on the banks of the magnificent Lough Swilly—that they were quite willing to remain on the spot, and to take upon their shoulders the extra duty which my renewed absence imposed upon them. I had only, therefore, to obtain the Captain's permission for a fresh run. This was easily gained, for he was the most indulgent of mortals; and his only caution was,—“Now, mind—don't you be falling in love with any of these Irish girls. It will be quite time enough for that when you are a Post Captain.”

I promised to attend to his advice; and set out on this new, but rather wild expedition in the highest glee, wishing for

no better sport than to try the firmness of my resolutions on this head, though, it must be confessed, I was fully more inclined to follow the precept enjoined upon me by another friend, who, as if to better the Captain's instruction, said,

“Do take care of what you are about, when you mix with those fair and fascinating witches the Irish ladies, and never hold yourself as heart-safe, unless you are in love with at least two of them at once!”

Off I went; but it is needless to state whether the course steered was to the east or to the west after leaving Londonderry, the chief city in that part of Ireland. Indeed, for my own part, I was almost indifferent in what direction the road lay; for the whole scene was so new and so full of interest and variety, and I had already met with so much attention in the country, that I felt a sort of certainty of finding much amusement and a welcome reception wherever I went. Meanwhile, the circumstance of having a letter of introduction in my pocket naturally determined my route; and having hired a good

stout horse, I strapped my valise behind, and set out on a fine summer's evening, as deliberately in quest of adventures as any knight-errant that ever put lance in rest. Yet I was in no respect prepared to find myself so soon in what appeared very like a field of battle. I had not proceeded twenty miles before I came to a village surrounded by troops, and guarded at the ends of its few streets by cannon, which appeared to be loaded, as lighted matches were smoking by their side. A considerable encampment was formed on a slightly rising ground near the village; and on the neighbouring ground, still farther off, might be seen large irregular groups of people, who, I learned, upon inquiry, were chiefly Orange-men, preparing for a grand ceremonial procession on the 1st of July old style, or the 12th of July according to the present reckoning, the well-known anniversary of the battle of the Boyne. In order to resist this proceeding on the part of the Protestants, an immense multitude of the opposite, or Roman Catholic side of the question, were likewise assembled in this unquiet spot, and all the roads con-

verging towards that quarter were lined with parties of men carrying sticks in their hands, flocking to the scene of expected action. The military had been called in to keep the peace; but the angry passions of the respective factions were so much roused, that even the precautions above described seemed hardly sufficient to prevent the threatened conflict.

The sight was painful in the highest degree; and I could not but recollect with what different sensations I had viewed the chivalry of France and England drawn up in hostile array on the heights of Corunna. There the contest was between two different nations, one fighting against, and the other in defence of, the liberties of the country in which they were engaged. But here the combatants were brethren in blood, kindred in spirit, and all possessed—as they believed—with a common object,—the good of their native country! As a matter of curiosity, and of the most stirring kind of interest, I could have no great objection to seeing another such battle as that which I had witnessed near Corunna between those long-established

fighting-cocks the French and English ; but to look on while honest Pat and Tim were breaking one another's heads upon abstract political grounds, and English soldiery interposing with grape-shot and fixed bayonets to make them friends again, was what I had no mind for. I therefore tried to extricate myself forthwith from this unhappy struggle ; but my horse being tired could not proceed ; so I was forced to sleep in a village which, for aught I knew, might be sacked and burnt before morning.

Nothing occurred, however, to disturb the peace ; but I felt far from easy till out of reach of this furious excitement ; yet, strange to say, some quiet folks, a few miles distant, with whom I took breakfast, seemed scarcely to care or to know that the country round them was all on fire. From thence the course lay across a wild range of mountains, the names of which there was no one left to tell ; but geographers may recognise their position by the circumstance of one of them having on its top a sheet of fresh water called Loch Salt. Nothing can be conceived more

desolate or dreary than this part of the country ; and as there were few inhabitants upon it at any time, and none at all at this moment, I had no small difficulty in making good my way. Neither was the prospect of the place I was bound to much more agreeable. “ There can be little or no comfort,” thought I, “ in a region so sterile : whatever art might attempt to counteract such desolation, must be unavailing.”

But on coming nearer to the noble bay, or lough, on the banks of which the country-seat of my unknown friends was to be found, the aspect of things changed so suddenly, that if it had been done by magic it could scarcely have been rendered more surprising. A slight inequality in the ground served to conceal this ‘ jewel in the desert,’ as it was often called, till the whole of its rare beauties could be seen to the greatest advantage. Even without such a contrast as the wild moors afforded, the singular merits of this spot must have claimed the admiration of any one caring a straw for fine scenery ; but after such a preparative they appeared doubly grateful

to the senses ; and I put spurs to my horse, anxious to come nearer to such a delicious scene.

The mansion of my future friend, of which only partial glimpses could be caught now and then, was well guarded on every side by fine old trees, rising from the surface of carefully dressed grounds, richly stocked flower-gardens, long and wide avenues, and graceful terraces, some of which reached to the very water's edge, along a delicate beach on which the ripple scarcely broke. This charming domain occupied a narrow spit of land, or promontory, jutting forwards into a landlocked bay, or arm of the sea, in which the water appeared to lie always asleep, and as smooth as if, instead of being a mere branch uniting with the stormy Atlantic, it had been some artificial lake, contrived by the tasteful hand of a good fairy, the touch of whose wand it might be thought had likewise embellished the shore, to keep every thing in character. Nothing, indeed, which the most fertile imagination could suggest seemed to be wanting.

There was one extremely well-conceived device at this delightful spot, which I never remember to have seen any where else, though there must often occur in other places similar situations in which it might be imitated. Not far from the house, but quite hid under a thickly wooded cliff, overhanging a quiet bight or cove, about ten or fifteen yards across, lay a perfectly secluded pool, with a bottom of snow-white sand. It was deep in the middle, but shelved gradually to its margin, which rested on a narrow strip, or beach, of small round polished pebbles. This fringe, encircling the cove, was surmounted by a dry grassy bank, or natural terrace, reaching to the foot of the rock, the face of which was not merely perpendicular, but so much inclined, that the top more than plumbed the edge of the basin. Along the sky line, there was drawn a fence or veil of briars, honeysuckles, and other impervious bushes, interspersed with myrtles, wild roses, and fox-glove, so thickly woven together, that all external view of this beau ideal of a bath was rendered impossible. The only

access was by a narrow, steep, and winding path; and at the upper end was placed a high, locked gate, the key of which was in the exclusive charge of the ladies. I need say no more of the uses of this most enchanting of earthly grottoes, than that, if Diana and her nymphs had been as well provided, the catastrophe of Actæon could never have occurred.

Meanwhile, as I rode on, ignorant as yet of these and many other rich and rare beauties of this singular spot, and only admiring the general aspect of things, I began, for the first time, to reflect on the extreme awkwardness of my situation. I had no personal acquaintance with any one of the large party here assembled; nor was there the least reason for supposing that any one of them had ever heard of the intruder, or that, when told who and what he was, they would be a whit more inclined to notice him.

Said I to myself, “I am merely the bearer of an introductory letter to a lady, who is herself no more than a guest in the house; and although it might have been allowable enough to have called to deliver

such an introduction, had business or accident brought me to the neighbourhood, or even within a short ride, yet it does seem rather a strong measure to travel fifty or sixty miles across a wild and disturbed country merely to pay a morning call."

The provoking inference, therefore, that my intention was to make a visit of some duration, became inevitable; and I pictured to myself the excessive annoyance of having a string of explanations to give respecting my movements, which, after all, might not be followed by any invitation to remain. After cogitating for a long time, I resolved to steal up to the house, if possible, unperceived,—to have my horse turned over to the groom, and my portmanteau stowed out of sight,—and then to walk boldly up to the door, with a visiting-card in one hand, and my credentials in the other, to be delivered to the servant for the lady to whom the letter was addressed. I next proposed to stroll about the woods, to give time for any good things said of the bearer in the introduction to work their way. I hoped, by this rather clumsy manœuvre,

that by the time I returned to the house its inmates might be prepared to receive the stranger ; and then, if their invitation to remain should happen not to be very pressing, I might pretend to be collecting specimens for my geological friends, and so make my escape ; though, to own the truth, nothing was farther from my thoughts than geology or any other scientific object.

In spite of these ingenious plans, I felt rather absurdly situated, and half wished I had not engaged at all in such an unpromising adventure. It seemed, however, too late to retract, and therefore I jogged on, as earnestly hoping not to be detected as ever did any troops in advancing to the attack of a besieged fort.

What, then, was my speechless horror, on riding up the approach, to discover a cavalcade of not fewer than a dozen ladies and gentlemen bearing right down upon me from the house. Had it been a troop of French cuirassiers charging across the ground, and threatening annihilation to the unfortunate hack and his rider, I could not have been much more astounded. It was natural to suppose that, as the mas-

ter of the house was probably of the number, he would stop to inquire the business of the suspicious-looking stranger invading his grounds. This I could but ill explain ; as the person for whom I brought a letter being an elderly lady, was not likely to be on horseback amidst a party of young folks. I foresaw, at all events, that there would be a general halt ordered ; while the poor new-comer, with his draggled horse and swollen valise (indicating any thing but a hasty departure), would become the object of pleasant criticism to the quizzical dandies and young ladies of the party—pleasant, I mean, to them ; but wretched work for the hapless wight exposed to their pitiless pelting. Even when this scrutiny was over, what were they to do with their unexpected, self-elected companion ? His horse was now too tired, and much too ugly at any time to accompany such gay palfreys as were prancing over the lawn ; yet they could not, in common civility, leave a stranger adrift—nor could they accompany him back to the house, without breaking up their expedition for the day.

All this flashed through my mind in a moment, and left me in a dire dilemma. I pulled up my jaded nag, however, with such a jerk, that I well nigh threw him on his haunches. Fortunately, a little inequality in the ground hid me from the view of the advancing cavalry; and at the same critical moment I discovered an opening in the fence on one side. Without considering or caring whither it might lead, I turned my charger round, urged him forwards with whip and spur, and dashed into the gap as if I had been flying from the arm of justice, instead of making my escape from as companionable a set of people as ever breathed. Had any of the party detected the bashful fugitive, and given chase, he must have been caught; for the path into which I had fled terminated in a road leading to some farm offices, but with no opening beyond.

The awkwardness of my situation—already considerable—was greatly augmented by this ridiculous proceeding, and I heard the riders pass within twenty yards of my hiding place, with the most unspeakable alarm lest any one of them

should catch a glimpse of me nestling behind a cart of hay. I breathed freer when the last servant's horse crossed the ridge ; and then, creeping from my hole, soon gained the stables adjoining the house, gave up my horse, secured the well-stuffed valise out of sight, and repaired, according to the original precious scheme, to the front door with my letter. I stood for five minutes with the knob of the bell in my hand—irresolute whether to go on with the adventure, or fairly to cut and run from it. At length, when the fatal pull was given, I listened to the sound, and felt myself what statesmen call ‘fully committed.’ There was now nothing left but to screw up my courage, as I best might, to meet the dangers and difficulties of the crisis.

There happened to be no one at home except the old lady herself, so that the plan succeeded very well ; and, though I now forget the details of the introduction, I can never cease to remember that the unbounded cordiality of the reception, not only from this excellent person, but from the master and mistress of the house, and

all their assembled friends, shewed how totally I had miscalculated the nature and extent of Irish hospitality. I learned, indeed, in no long time, that the fashion of the country is to receive every stranger as well, and to treat him with exactly the same perfect frankness and kindness, as they would do if they really knew him to merit such attention at their hands. If it shall prove on further acquaintance that he fails to make good his claim, they then treat him accordingly ; but in the first instance his title to a hospitable reception is always taken for granted.

As most of the delightful party, amongst whom I now found myself domesticated, are still alive—though more than twenty years have gone by since those days—I scarcely feel at liberty to describe the sayings and doings of the establishment into which I was so freely and confidentially admitted. Nothing, indeed, could be more characteristic of the country than the whole scene. There were several elderly persons, then in the autumn of life, though now waning into octogenarians ; and several were very young folks, scarcely able to

walk, who now count many ‘daughters and sons of beauty.’ There was a pretty equal admixture of Irish and English, amongst whom were several persons of rank; also one or two foreigners; besides much native wit, worth, and beauty, of the highest order, and all most delightfully set off by the graces and nameless enchantments of refined manners, and tasteful as well as useful accomplishments. I have rarely, if ever, seen in any part of the world so fascinating an assemblage of all that could render a country party agreeable as was here collected in one of the most out-of-the-way corners of Ireland. Nor is it to be wondered at if I very soon began to think of the ship and her routine drudgery with a degree of distaste I dared scarcely express even to myself. Compared to the delirious sort of witchery of this gay scene, every thing I had enjoyed before, even in the all-romantic Peninsula, or in the beautiful Islands of Madeira or Bermuda, looked spiritless and tame. The dull duties and discomforts of a sea-life—the trammels of naval discipline—and the insignificance

of a mere lieutenant's station, amidst all this luxury, and fashion, and wealth, and beauty, and rank, pressed on my fevered thoughts so severely, that at times I was half distracted with sheer despondency, and felt cut to the heart on recollecting the bitter necessity of returning to what seemed, at that intoxicating season, the vulgar duties of a sailor's life. My worthy Captain's advice was thrown to the winds; and indeed any heart, aged twenty-two, must have been made of cast-iron to have resisted the rides and walks, the pic-nic dinners, the dances, and the music parties, and suppers, besides the infinitely varied round of other amusements—grave and gay—which contributed to render, and will for ever preserve this nook of Ireland the true terrestrial paradise of my juvenile days.

How the deuce I ever contrived to get out of the magic circle, I hardly know; but if I could only feel myself at liberty, without a breach of confidence, to give a few of the details of those hours, I would stake great odds on the side of the effect which the description of such a reality

might produce, against the interest of the imaginary scenes in almost any romance. Although, unfortunately, this may not be done, I cannot resist the temptation of relating the cause and consequence of my introduction to these very kind persons, who, from that hour to this, have held their station amongst my steadiest friends.

I have already mentioned, that the gentleman whose introduction I carried was most urgent for me to deliver the letter in person ; but he gave no reasons for this anxiety ; nor indeed was I then aware, that besides his being an intimate friend, he was their family physician. While acting in this capacity, he had seen with regret how ineffectual his art had proved to alleviate the mother's sorrow caused by the recent loss of her favourite son. The young man had been in the Navy, and was about my age and standing in the service. These accidental coincidences suggested to her judicious and kind-hearted friend, that as I, in some degree, resembled, in appearance and in manners, the officer who was no more, the poor mother's

thoughts and feelings might possibly be diverted into a new channel, by the society of a person in so many respects similarly circumstanced to the child she had lost.

I was not made a party to this manœuvre, because the experiment might thus have been totally marred. It was obvious, indeed, that the mere consciousness of acting such a part must have imposed an awkward restraint upon me, fatal to the character I was intended to fill; so the good doctor left matters to work out their own course. A very different effect, it is true, from what he wished and expected, might have been produced; for instead of my being received with open arms, and helping to fill up the blank in the mother's wasted affections, my presence might only have proved irksome, from tending to keep alive the anguish of those wounds, which principle tells us rather to do our utmost to heal than seek to irritate by unavailing sorrow.

It so happened, fortunately for me, and, what was of more consequence, fortunately for the friendly physician's repu-

tation as a skilful ‘minister to the mind diseased,’ or rather to the pure but desolate heart, that the experiment completely succeeded—I hope and believe, to the mother’s consolation. To me, of course, the reception I met with was matter of delight and astonishment; and at the time I could not by any means account for the notice with which I was honoured. So much so, indeed, that I occasionally felt somewhat startled, and almost oppressed, with the sense of obligation imposed by such unusual and unmerited attentions.

The first explanation which reached me of the mystery, to whose agency I was so deeply indebted, is really so touching in itself, and likewise so fertile, as I conceive, in matter for useful reflection to those who may be similarly circumstanced, that I give it without reserve. The whole incident—though to some it may perhaps appear trivial—had a very essential effect in modifying the course of my subsequent life—not so much by raising me in my own opinion, which it certainly did, as by inspiring me with still stronger motives to exertion, and with higher hopes of

deserving, in time, a distinction so very flattering. In a letter which I received from this most excellent old lady, about six months after my first acquaintance with her, and just before I quitted England for the East Indies, these words occur:—

“Once more, adieu! I must hope you will write to me; let me constantly know how you proceed, and how I can address you; and recollect, you have received the freedom of this house. I believe I told you I had lost a son in the Navy, a lieutenant, and of superior talents. I therefore consider that Heaven has given you to my care in his place—and may the Almighty protect you!”

CHAPTER III.

TRICKS UPON TRAVELLERS.

A CURIOUS and vastly pleasing fashion prevails in that part of Ireland where I was so nearly bewitched as almost to forget my ship, my duties, and every thing else but beauty bright ! When a country party, such as I have been describing, had passed a certain time together, they seldom broke up entirely, or scattered themselves in different directions, but generally shifted, or emigrated in a body—flitted, I think they used to call it—to the house of some one of the number. Now and then various members of the group dropped off by the way, but their places were presently filled up by other friends, either ready in the new hive, or who soon found their way to it, when the well-known sounds of festivity were heard in the neighbourhood.

In this manner the country party, into

which I had been so kindly admitted an honorary member, made several moves, with sundry losses and sundry accessions to its numbers ; and as every day rendered this life more and more grateful, I could scarcely bear to think of returning to the tame occupations and rugged society of the frigate, the duties of which had so recently been my greatest and most sincere delight. Meanwhile, since my good-natured Captain, and still better-natured messmates, made no difficulties about this protracted absenteeism, I continued to involve myself deeper and deeper at every step. I failed not to perceive at times, that I was getting into rather a dangerous scrape for a younger son and a young officer, who had yet to work his own way in the world. But as these reflections interfered rather impertinently with the enjoyments of the hour, they were crushed down and kept out of sight as much as possible, at that gay period.

What surprised me most, all this time, was the air of refinement and high polish in the Irish society amongst whom I was thus casually thrown. I had previously

entertained an idea that their hospitality, proverbial in all parts of the world, was of a rude and rather troublesome description. I found it, on the contrary, marked not only by the strongest lines of sincerity and kindness, but by many of those delicate touches of consideration for the feelings of others which form the most indubitable symptoms of genuine good-breeding. So very carefully, indeed, are these traits preserved as characteristics of their society, that rather more latitude in the intercourse of young people than I remember to have seen elsewhere is not only permitted, but even perhaps encouraged. The propriety, as well as safety, of all this, consists in the perfect confidence which the parties possess in one another's sense of what is due to themselves; so that a degree of freedom, which in England might possibly be called bold or odd, is, in Ireland, merely one branch of a peculiar system of manners. It rests, no doubt, on as scrupulous a foundation of sentiment and principle as ours does, but it is less restricted by etiquettes, and far less frozen over with those conventional

forms which the uninitiated find so troublesome to break through.

So far from discovering that the stories were true about the sort of compulsion used in matters of drinking, I can safely say—whatever might have been once the fashion—that, during the course of experience in joviality I went through in the north of Ireland, I seldom met with any thing at a gentleman's table approaching even to exigence on this score, far less to the formidable bullying which we had been warned against, when the alternative rested between another bottle or an ounce of lead. I do not deny that our friends the Irish have a wonderfully winning way of insinuating their good cheer upon us, and sometimes of inducing us—without the aid of fire-arms—to swallow more claret than is perhaps good for us.

I landed once at Burncrana, a pretty little quiet village, with a watering-place look, on the eastern banks of that great and beautiful bay Lough Swilly. One side of this noble harbour is formed by the bold promontory of Inishowen, celebrated in every land for its noble whisky,

second only—if second it be, (which I am bound as a Scotchman to doubt)—to that of Ferntosh or Glenlivet. I was accompanied by an English gentleman, on the first day of his landing in Ireland. As he then seriously imagined the inhabitants to belong to a sort of wild and uncouth race, I could see he was rather surprised at the gentlemanlike deportment of an acquaintance of mine resident on the spot, for whom he had brought a letter. We had walked together to his house, or rather cottage—for he was not a fixed resident, but came there for summer quarters. The neatness, and even elegance, of the domestic arrangements of his temporary establishment, both without and within the dwelling, gave token of a taste many degrees removed from the state of people far back in civilisation. Presently the ladies came; and their national frankness—modified by the most entire and unaffected simplicity—puzzled my friend completely. In due season the dressing-bell sent us off to prepare for dinner; and while we were getting ready, my companion said to me—

“ I see perfectly what this fellow is at ; he means to sew you and me up, by pouring claret down our throats. You may do as you please, but I’ll be shot if he plays off his Irish pranks on me. I will eat his dinner—take a couple of glasses of his wine—make my bow to the ladies—go on board by eight or nine o’clock—and, having given them a dinner in return, shall have done my duty in the way of attention, after which I shall totally cut the connexion. I have no idea of their abominable fashion of forcing strangers to drink.”

“ We shall see,” said I ; and, having knocked the dust off our shoes, down we went to dinner.

Every thing was plain, and suitable to the pretensions of a cottage. There was no pressing to eat or drink during dinner ; and in process of time the cloth was removed—the ladies sipped a little sweet wine, and disappeared.

“ Now for it,” whispered my friend ; “ he has sent the women out of the way, that he may ply us the better.”

And I must own things looked rather

suspicious ; for our host, instead of sitting down again at the dinner-table, walked to a bow-window overlooking the anchorage, and exactly facing the setting sun, at that hour illuminating the whole landscape, in the gorgeous style peculiar to combined mountain and lake scenery.

“ Why should we not enjoy this pleasant prospect while we are discussing our wine ? ” said the master of the house.

At that instant the door opened, and in walked the servant, as if he knew by intuition what was passing in his master’s head.

“ Tim,” said our host, “ put the card-table here in the bow-window, and give us some other glasses,—also, if you have such a thing, bring up a bottle of claret.”

Tim nodded, smiled, and made the fitting adjustments. The table was barely large enough to hold a noble long-corked bottle, for the fashion of claret decanters had not as yet reached that remote district of the empire. Round the margin was placed the necessary accompaniment of capacious glasses—famous tall fellows, with such slender stalks, that they seem-

ed scarcely equal to the weight of their generous load.

My friend and I exchanged glances, and I could see his shoulders slightly raised, as if he was saying internally,

“Now we are in for it! — but I will not drink a drop more than I choose.”

The claret, which in itself was most delicious, was cooled in as perfect style as if it had been subject to the skill of an Abdar or professional wine-cooler at Madras. The party consisted, I think, of four or five persons—I forget exactly which—but this one bottle, I remember, just passed round the group twice. As the flavour of the beverage appeared to have become more exquisite at the second turn than at the first, though but a short interval had been allowed to elapse, it seemed odd that another bottle was not instantly called for. Instead of which, our landlord went on expatiating on the beauties of the Lough, and the fineness of the season in general, and the sunset in particular, for full five minutes after the wine had disappeared—when he suddenly said, with a half-hesitating tone, to-

wards my English friend, who sat at his elbow, —

“ I beg your pardon — perhaps you would take some more wine ? ”

As no one made any objection, the bell was rung, and Tim reappeared, bearing with him another bottle. This likewise vanished in a trice, and Tim was again summoned.

“ Bring some more claret,” said the master to the man — or rather boy, as he was called, though twice as old as any of the party.

At this instant I caught my companion's eye ; and I could see he was becoming alive to the plot against him — so much so, indeed, that he seemed to be preparing to rise. The following conversation, however, attracted his attention, and fixed him to his seat.

“ Well, Tim, what are you gaping at ? Why don't you run for the clar't ? ”

“ I didn't know,” replied the other, “ whether you 'd like to use the whole of it.”

“ Use the whole of it ! ” exclaimed his master — “ What does the boy mean ? What are you at, Tim ? ”

“ Oh, sir,” quoth the well-instructed rogue, “ I knew you came here only for a short time, and as the wine you brought was but little, I didn’t know but you might wish not to use it all entirely to-day.” And then he whispered something in his master’s ear, the words of which we could not distinguish. The reply, however, shewed, or seemed to shew, what had been said.

“ Nonsense, Tim, nonsense, you’re an ass, man, bring it up.”

Tim accordingly disappeared, but soon returned with a basket apparently full of straw ; at the bottom of which, however, after some considerable shew of hunting, a couple of bottles were said to be found.

“ Confound you, Tim ; is this all ?” said the host.

“ It is, sir,” lied Tim ; “ and in faith, sir,” added he, still lying, “ it’s one more bottle than I thought there was ; for there was but the dozen when we started from Derry a week ago ; and you know, sir, you and the collector on last Tuesday——”

But the catalogue of circumstances which were intended to act as buttresses

to Master Tim's inventions, was cut short by a peremptory order to leave the room. This he did so soon as he had made a circumbendibus to escape notice, and deposited the basket behind his master's chair, muttering, as he put it down with a thump—

“There's as good a couple of bottles of wine as ever was uncorked.”

The fresh broach was, indeed, so delicious, that we could hardly believe it was of the same vintage as that of the previous bin, though our host assured us it was ‘the identical.’ At all events, under its genial inspiration, the glorious sun, which was just touching the tops of the hills above Rathmullin, seemed already becoming doubly glorious, and the whole landscape more brilliant than ever.

Tim's basket well merited a still higher eulogium than he had given it; but while his reputation as a judge of wine rose, his character for veracity fell in about the same proportion, since we beheld, in due season, not merely two, but three, and at last a fourth long-necked gentleman from Bourdeaux emerge from under the straw!

The trick played upon us by these confederates was now apparent enough ; but the wine, fortunately, was of that light and pure kind which does not produce much effect on strong heads, and that of my companion was proof against far greater trials than this. He was, indeed, perfectly aware of what was passing ; and though dearly loving the wine (which he told me afterwards was superior to any he had ever before tasted), and thirsting vehemently for more, yet he had no notion of being made tipsy by means of a common-place concert between host and butler. He therefore rose to leave the room, expecting, of course, to be forcibly detained, or, at all events, he reckoned upon being begged and entreated to sit down again.

Not a whit ! The wily native knew his man exactly, and, instead of arresting his guest by force or by supplication, merely observed to him, that if he had a mind to admire the prospect, there was still daylight enough to command a view down the bay from the little knoll on the right. The Englishman was sorely puzzled by all this. He saw there was none of the detention

he expected would be practised upon him, and yet he had a strong consciousness that he was undergoing the operation well known afloat and ashore by the title of 'the game of humbug.' At the same time, he felt the most eager desire to take another good pull at the claret.

There was no wine before us at this critical juncture of the evening, and our landlord, who, most unaccountably, seemed indifferent to this material circumstance, went on prosing for a quarter of an hour about Protestant ascendancy, the eternal siege of Derry, the battle of the Boyne, and such-like stale topics. At length one of the company—whose interest in these subjects resembled that of a man who has never looked through a telescope when listening to the conversation of a company of astronomers—became somewhat impatient, and, watching for a pause, asked his host if it were the custom in Ireland to discuss Orange politics with empty glasses?

"God bless me!" cried the other, with well-feigned surprise, "is there no wine on the table?" and ringing the bell furi-

ously, scolded poor Tim so naturally that the confederate was almost thrown out.

“ Well! you numskull, why don’t you make off with you, and bring something for the gentlemen to drink ?”

Tim stood fast till interrogated a second time, and then replied, with perfect gravity, that there was not another drop of wine in the house, swearing by all manner of saints to the truth of his assertion.

Upon this the master got up in a rage, and brushing past the servant, declared his intention of searching the cellar himself. He was absent some time ; and before he came back, we had prevailed on our hesitating companion to sit down again. Just as the stranger took his place, and as if there had been some electrical communication between his chair and the handle of the door, it opened, and in walked our generous entertainer, exulting in his success, crowing like chanticleer, and bearing in each hand a couple of bottles, clicking against each other ; while Tim, with a degree of impudence equalled only by that of his master, substituted clean glasses, of a still more capacious swallow than the first.

To these were added two pair of candles which towered high above the jolly crew, and promised to last till another dawn should look in upon our revels. By this time the twilight had almost entirely ebbed away, and was succeeded by that cheerful, aurora-kind of brilliancy in the sky, which points out the place of the sun during the whole of his summer night's journey in those high latitudes. Politics dropped out of the conversation by general consent, for the joyous juice of the grape soon melted us all into one mind—and a hundred topics of more pleasing interest were started, in which the strangers could join without fear of any angry discussion. I will not say that these were discussed without warmth, for the mirth and animation of the company rose very pleasantly as each fresh bottle found its way by some magical process to the table. But I must own it was sometimes rather difficult to tell who were the listeners amongst us, or to say who was guest and who landlord, for the party seemed like a circle of brothers, all equally at home.

This went on for an indefinite length

of time, but I should be the veriest conjuror on earth to say how long. Through the hazy atmosphere of my recollection of that jolly evening, I remember that about eleven o'clock, more or less, our host was enchanted almost beyond the power of words with seeing his wine so much relished, and tickled also with the good joke of having succeeded, as he thought, in throwing the suspicious Englishman off his guard, and making him drink just as much wine as he, the Irishman, thought fit to impose. On this occasion, however, he inverted the proverb, and reckoned without his guest, for, by one imprudent remark, he had well nigh torn the laurels from his brow.

“Well, sir!” he exclaimed; “although this is the first day you ever set foot on the Island, you have seen enough, I hope, to satisfy you that we are not quite such savages as you supposed. Political liberty we have not got, it is true; but liberty hall is the true title of every Irish gentleman’s dining-room—there’s no compulsion here, you must see very clearly.”

It was but little, however, that my

English friend could now see very clearly of any thing, for by this hour both the physical and moral optics of the company were mystified out of all distinct focus of adjustment; and the above premature announcement of victory, on the part of the native, hurried back all the stranger's suspicions that he was speedily to be made a martyr at the shrine of old Bacchus. Fired with this idea, he started on his feet, and eyeing the door for a long time before he ventured on the voyage, with a bold determination, and taking a good departure from his chair, he gained his port. He had, undoubtedly, expected to be lugged back again; for he whisked the tails of his coat out of reach, while, with his other hand on the lock of the door, and swaying himself about from side to side, like a ship in a calm, he stood the very image of tottering equilibrium, as the mathematicians call it.

Our adroit landlord, who was not a man to shrink from difficulties, mustered to his aid all the resources of a long well-practised hospitality, and gallantly met this great occasion. It is true, he had

now some three or four bottles of wine under his girdle more than when he and Tim had tricked the party about the poverty of the cellar, just as the sun was going down. That manœuvre, and all other similar devices, were, of course, exhausted; so he took another line, and called out,

“ Oh, you’re off, are you?—wish you joy—you’ll find the ladies in the drawing-room—I think I hear the tinkle of the piano—I prefer the tinkle of the glass—pray tell the damsels we are coming, by and by—mind you say ‘by and by’—I don’t like to be too particular, for fear of seeming rude—don’t you see?”

This speech was wound up by a telegraphic flourish of the hand towards Tim, who stood near, with a bottle between his feet, the screw buried in the cork, and his body bent to the effort, which he only delayed to exercise till ordered by his master.

“ Out with him, man! out with the cork!” cried the host. The loud report which succeeded rang over the apartment, like the sweetest music to the souls of the

ever-thirsty company. Tim's thunder was echoed back by a truly bacchanalian shout, such as nothing on earth can give proper emphasis to, except double allowance of claret. The Englishman, fairly subdued by the sound, glided again to the table; then seizing his brimming glass in one hand, and grasping the fist of his merry host in the other, he roared out,

“ You really are an uncommon good fellow; and hang me if ever I distrust an Irishman again as long as I live ! ”

But within three minutes afterwards, this promise was broken; for as soon as we had discussed the bottle which the incomparable Tim had so opportunely introduced, the master of the house, seeing us at length quite at his mercy, and eager to go on, rose, and said, to our great amaze,

“ Come! we've had wine enough: let's join the ladies in the next room. ”

The disappointed company stared at one another, and loudly proclaimed that it was not fair to limit us in this way. The Englishman in particular wished to remain; but our host was inexorable. Meanwhile, Timothy grinned from ear to ear

—familiar with his master's tricks upon travellers—and the landlord deliberately opening the door, marched off the field of battle with flying colours!

As we moved along to the drawing-room, my companion whispered to me,

“I must own, I have been well served for my suspicions. I made quite certain of being bullied into drinking more than was agreeable to me; but it turns out,” cried he, laughing, “quite the reverse; for I cannot get a drop of wine, now that I want it.”

“Well! well!” cried our hospitable friend, who overheard the conclusion of this remark, “you shall do as you please ever after this evening.”

He then shewed us to a couple of snug rooms, which he said were ours, as long as we chose to occupy them.

For the rest, I went off to the Giant's Causeway in the course of next day; and on returning, at the end of a week, found that my friend, instead of cutting the connexion, according to promise, had not once been out of sight of the house, and had never been asked to drink a bottle,

or even a glass, more than he liked. He declared, indeed, that he had rarely, in any country, met with persons so truly hospitable, or more gentlemanlike, or so perfectly reasonable, in the truest sense of these words, than accident had thrown him in the way of becoming acquainted with, in what, previously, he had considered a region inhabited almost by a different set of beings from his own countrymen.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FARMERS' SOCIETY.

It would be doing scrimp justice, however, to the dear Green Island, were it not to be mentioned, that in some districts, and amongst certain tribes of the merry natives, a few rough touches of the ancient manners are still preserved entire, to the great amusement of the parties themselves, and to the high edification, no doubt, of such novices as myself in the mysteries of hard drinking.

Not very long after the occurrence above related, in which Tim and his master quizzed the strangers in such good style, I had occasion to visit a city at some distance from Lough Swilly. I had been charged by my friends in Scotland to make inquiries into various topics, particularly that of Fiorin; and having soon made acquaintance with the late Dr. Richardson, readily obtained all the in-

formation required from that enthusiastic advocate for the cultivation of the grass in question. Before I set out for Port Rush, the head-quarters of Fiorin cultivation, a merry friend of mine hearing me ask some questions about corn-crops, hay-crops, and such matters, begged to know if I should not like to be introduced to the Farmers' Society of their good city; "for there," said he, "you will meet with all the best-informed agriculturists of the country." Of course, I gladly accepted his offer, and that of his companionship to the Society's dinner on that very day. As we walked to the house, which I think lay about a mile or so beyond the limits of the town, I taxed my memory for all the queries which had been put to me on the subject of farming, resolving to apply these at the most fitting moments, and rejoicing over the famous opportunity I now had of reaping a grand harvest of information, at a small cost of trouble.

On we trudged to a pretty little country inn, which we reached just as the dinner was rattling on the table. The party consisted of a dozen persons, or there

may have been a dozen and a half—as pleasant men, in their way, as could be met with. Before the repast was over, I chanced to ask my treacherous friend, next whom I was placed, some questions on the subject of turnip husbandry. He heard me out, and laughed exceedingly; but instead of answering, called out to the chairman of the meeting,

“I beg to inform you, sir, that the gentleman on my right wishes to know whether we in the north of Ireland pull up our turnips, or let them remain in the ground, as in East Lothian, for the sheep to eat? Now, sir, I take this to be an agricultural question—don’t you?”

“Certainly it is,” replied the president.

“Undoubtedly agricultural!” cried out the rest of the company; upon which, turning to the waiter, the chairman said, in a chuckling and delighted tone,

“Boy! take the glass to Mr. Hall—the strange gentleman there.”

Accordingly, a glass, not very much above the ordinary size, was handed to me, and straightway filled with whisky-

toddy. This I was required by the president to drink off instantly.

“On what compulsion? and wherefore?” I asked, laughing, with the glass at my lips.

“Oh!” exclaimed he, “on no compulsion at all, my dear sir; for this, you must know, is Liberty Hall. Do exactly as you please, only conforming to the laws of the Association; that is to say,” continued the president, grinning, “you will of course see the obvious propriety of complying with the fixed rules of the Farmers’ Society, one of the strictest of which very properly is, that no one present shall allude to the subject of agriculture, much less discourse upon it, as you have done, or ask any questions?”

There was a national comicality about this queer rule which was of course quite unanswerable; so I paid the penalty, and drank off the punch, without further delay; for it was admirable in its ingredients, and, what is almost as important, admirably concocted.

I had no sooner emptied the glass, than I was ordered to fill and swallow another

bumper, as a fine for having used the left hand instead of the right; and when I remonstrated against the injustice of fining a man for breaking laws of which he had never before heard the existence, the president said, with mock gravity,

“Do you really suppose, sir, that such an excuse as not knowing the existence of a law against hog-stealing would help you in a court of justice, if you were to run off with a pig?”

The reasoning was again unanswerable, so down went the drink.

Good whisky-punch, well made, is certainly, of all the tipples ever invented by mortal man, the most insinuating and the most loving, because, more than any other, it disposes the tippler to be pleased with himself. It brightens his hopes, assuages his sorrows, crumbles down his difficulties, softens the hostility of his enemies, and, in fact, inclines him, for the time being, to think generously of all mankind, at the tip-top of which it naturally and good-naturedly places his own dear self, with a glass in one hand and a mug in the other, without a wish ungratified, and as unsus-

picious of evil as if not a single drop of gall, or a sprig of wormwood, existed on the face of the earth !

My merry agricultural friends, who knew all the depths and shallows of the most delightful of all navigations, that of a punch-bowl, were well aware that if they could, by any means, get the unwary stranger to pass a certain point of moderation, no additional impulse on their part would be required to bring about the grand consummation they aimed at, and which they were all the more bent upon, from seeing me a little on my guard.

It need scarcely be told that I failed, and that they succeeded in making me enter their trap. I have, indeed, only a very confused recollection of the whole scene ; but I do remember seeing the hands of the clock dancing a jig about the hour of twelve, and have some faint remembrance of being made to drink at least three times to the glorious and immortal memory of King William III., merely because I could not find articulation or memory enough to repeat, without tripping, an immense long tail to this royal and loyal Orange toast.

The first distinct image which remains on my mind of this after-dinner scene is what the architects call a Plafond view of the table; that is, such a prospect of its under surface as can be obtained only by the spectator lying flat on his back on the floor. I could discover that there was singing going on above me, and much rattling of glass. I could also detect the well-known sound of the toddy, in the act of being poured from one mug to another—the only genuine method of mixing the terrestrial ingredients which go to the formation of this most perfect of celestial beverages. Its only rival seems to be the delicious iced sherbet of the torrid zone, when eagerly quaffed, at some sleepless midnight, on Choultry Plain, with the thermometer at 100° , and the arid land wind drifting over the ground, like the air of a blast-furnace, from the red-hot sands of the Carnatic.

Be that as it may, I contrived to crawl out, unseen, between two chairs, across which a worthy agriculturist was stretched, like one of his own sheep ready for the market, with his hands touching the

floor on one side, his feet on the other. I escaped to the garden, and there walked or rolled about, for half an hour, somewhat in the style of a Portsmouth wherry on the Spit, at the meeting of the tides. The night was mild and beautiful, and the clear fresh air revived, though it failed to steady me. At last, deep in the night, the party broke up — the sleepers were awakened, and off we all set on our return to the city. We made such zig-zag traverses along the road, that had quadrilles been known in those days, the passengers might have imagined we were practising for the ensuing county ball. Not content with these vagaries in the ‘fair way,’ we must needs mount upon the top of the sea-wall; one side of which, towards the road, was not above a yard high; but the other, looking outwards, might be twenty or thirty perpendicular feet from the beach; while the top was only four or five feet in breadth. The least gay of the party pronounced vehemently against this route; but the quality of whisky, as I have before observed, being to level difficulties and hide dangers, the

precipice towards the sea appeared hardly high enough or steep enough for the magnanimous courage of our agriculturists, some of whom kept coasting along the outer edge of the parapet, within the breadth of a furrow, as they said, of the next world, solely to augment the risk, and so to do honour to the generous spirit by which they were moved.

Such are the sort of pranks which Pat is apt to divert himself withal, when he has no real business in hand, or when his duties, public or domestic, do not claim his serious attention. It is true, he is sometimes a wild hand enough to deal with, even when not a drop of the cratur has passed his lips; but he is not a whit more so, I verily believe, than either English, Scotch, or Welshman, when fairly roused into action by motives suitable to his peculiar national temperament. We have hardly any seamen in the fleet who are more sober and orderly, or who, when properly managed, are more docile and amenable to really good discipline, than the Irish. Perhaps it may occasionally happen that there is a difficulty in getting

Paddy to see things in the particular light in which we wish him to view them, or, as we say, to make him cast with his head on the right tack; but there is no man who performs more or better work when once this is accomplished.

I remember being much struck with this peculiarity of the Irish character some years after the period of the farmers' feast above described. Indeed, I have not infrequently been puzzled in Ireland to recognise the same individual when engaged in transacting important affairs, and when he allowed himself to relax after the serious work was over.

In the autumn of the year 1817, on returning from India with important despatches on board, I reached the chops of the British channel, in command of a sloop-of-war. So confident were we of reaching Spithead in a day or two at furthest, that my travelling trunk was packed, and best boots polished, ready for a start to town. But, just as we expected to strike soundings, the wind shifted to the eastward, and we were blown off so far to sea, that we were well nigh starved.

After much beating about, we succeeded in reaching the west coast of Ireland, harassed to the last degree. I landed with my despatches, accompanied by several passengers, at the little town of Bantry, which gives its name to a splendid estuary — perhaps the finest in the world, and one which must rise into immense importance whenever the present heartless and systematic agitations of Ireland shall be allowed to subside, and that magnificent portion of the empire shall have become as much an integral part of England as the banks of the Forth and Clyde have so happily been rendered by the permanent, and cordial, and mutually beneficial union of the lesser with the greater country.

There happened to be a fair at Bantry; and it so fell out, that just as we landed, a furious battle with shillelahs was commencing close to the beach; so that we had before us the actual representation of a scene we had often heard described, but never actually witnessed before. A householder — why or wherefore we could not find out — had refused to pay certain taxes or municipal duties. On intimation

being given him, that on a certain day his furniture and other goods would be distrained, he prepared to do any thing rather than submit. At all events, he was resolved to have a fight for it. Such was the story we were told on landing, as to the cause of the wild uproar which saluted us.

The owner of the house laid his plans with some degree of that military skill which all men acquire in a turbulent country. He prevailed on a dozen or twenty of his friends to stow themselves away in his rooms, and, at a given signal, when the officers of government were in full pursuit of the articles named in their bond, they started up, shillelah in hand, and played crack ! crack ! crack ! to the right and left. Twenty heads were broken in less than twenty seconds. As we jumped out of our boat, delighted to touch the ground after so long a voyage, these were the first sounds which saluted our ears, mixed up with loud cheers by the different parties, as victory swerved from side to side.

It was difficult for persons, so ignorant

as we were of such things, to believe that so much execution could be done in so short a period. Before we reached the brow of the hill, however, which overlooked the village, an interval of only a few minutes, it was all over. On our way we encountered four or five of the wounded, preciously mauled to be sure, in charge of a reserve party of officers, who, suspecting the ambush, had assembled in readiness to support the first detachment.

This episode, added to the ordinary bustle and business in a fair, caused us the greatest difficulty in getting away from the town. No carriages or horses were to be hired, at any price ; and I really know not what we should have done, had not a gentleman, seeing our distress, dismounted from his horse, and, prevailing on one or two others to do the same, kindly offered them to us, that we might proceed without further delay to Skibbereen, the nearest town through which the mail passed.

It was after sunset before we left the uproarious scene at Bantry, the sounds of which we could trace long after we left

the village ; and by the time we reached our destination it was dark, or nearly so. On alighting from our nags at the inn door, a gentleman stepped forward ; and, with the air of a person who has been waiting for some friends, addressed us in these words :—

“ You’re welcome, at last, gentlemen ! I hope, indeed, you may not be too late ; the piece is just about to commence, and there is much difficulty about places—so, come along !”

All this being Hebrew to us, we begged to know what was required, conceiving that we must be mistaken for some other party.

“ Oh, no, gentlemen, it’s not a bit of a mistake ! I discovered at first sight that you were just landed, and I thought you would surely like to see the play, which is now acting, or soon to be acted, with great applause in the Court House. Strolling theatricals, they are—not a regular company—we don’t sport that yet—but very good ones of their kind ; so, come along, as the place is crammed full to the ceiling already. Nevertheless, there ’ll

always be room for strangers, which you will soon perceive."

As the coach was not to pass for some hours, and no post-horses could be procured, we yielded to our obliging friend's entreaties, and proceeded, booted and spurred, and as we were, to the theatre. With much difficulty we reached the bottom of the stairs, the ascent of which appeared an utter impossibility. At length our guide made himself heard; and the moment the crowd were informed that the party consisted of strangers, a lane was formed, and we reached the upper door. The same magical words had the effect of displacing several gentlemen in the best part of the house, and we presently found ourselves seated in the midst of some very pleasant company, in good time for the curtain drawing up. Our friendly pilot now left us, saying, that although he had got us in, he could not stay himself; "but," whispered he, "after the play, come you to the Harp and Crown, and there you'll find supper ready, all piping hot for you, and beds with well-toasted sheets, and places secured in the

coach ; so give yourselves no manner of concern about the future, but enjoy the play and the society about you."

Our friend proved himself even better than his word ; for he contrived to hire a chaise for me and my despatches, by which means I was enabled to set off in the middle of the night. On reaching Cork, I found that I had exhausted all my cash, and had not wherewithal to prosecute the journey ; but as a couple of my own quarterly-pay bills were safe in my pocket, it seemed impossible there could be any difficulty in getting money. On proceeding to the nearest bank, and presenting my government bills, the gentlemen in the office handed them from one to the other—held them to the light—whispered amongst themselves—inspected me in no very agreeable style—and at length said, they were really very sorry, but they could not give me money for this paper.

"It is very strange," I said. "In no part of the world that I have ever been in is any species of document representing money preferred to this."

“That may be, sir, but we can’t help it, we cannot give you cash.”

I proceeded to another and another bank, but all to no purpose—tried mine host of the Red Lion—but he shook his head very distrustfully. I was sorely perplexed, and thought of going to the military commandant, but, unfortunately, he had left the city. In the morning of that day, after coming from Skibbereen, I had, of course, proceeded to Cove, about twenty miles from Cork, to report myself to the naval commander-in-chief; but as I had no doubt about the facility of getting money for government bills, I never dreamed, when there, of asking the Admiral to indorse them. As many hours must have been lost in returning all the way to Cove, I proceeded again to one of the banks I had before attacked, and tried all my eloquence; but they were still obdurate, and I marched back to the street in despair. On my way to the inn, I was overtaken by one of the partners of the firm.

“Were you never in Cork before?” he asked; “and if so, don’t you know

any one in the city who could identify you?"

Before I could answer his question, he saw that I was hurt at his suspicions, and called out,

"Nay! nay! don't be angry, now, nor colour up, nor fly in a passion. There is no harm in being an object of suspicion, provided no injury is done you. And, for my part, I, individually, believe you really are the officer you represent yourself to be; and if the worst comes to the worst, you shall have the money to put you on your way; but I would rather go through with the affair in a business-like manner."

"Well," I said, "that is kind enough. I was once in Cork for a single day, six years ago, when I made acquaintance with Counsellor O'Brien."

"In that case," cried he, evidently much relieved, "the matter will soon be settled, for here is the very street in which the gentleman lives, let us call upon him."

As ill luck would have it, this person, the only man I was acquainted with in

Cork, had that moment rode off from the door!

“There’s a plague,” said the banker, resuming his embarrassed air; “for, to be quite frank with you, we have lately been so grievously taken in by a swindler, who, pretending to be a naval officer, forged and passed off a considerable number of bills similar to those in your hand, that I fear you will find it next to impossible to negotiate them.”

While I was pondering over this dilemma, and pacing up and down the streets with my friendly banker, he suddenly stopped, and, turning round, called, or rather shouted,

“Oh!” now I think I have it! Did not you say, my good sir, that you were charged with despatches to the Government, about the Mahratta war? Where are they?—let me have a look at them?”

This brilliant idea gave new life to the transaction, and away we trotted to the inn. The desk was speedily opened—Admiral Sir Richard King’s orders, and Governor Elliott of Madras’s despatches produced, with a whole bagful of packets

from Calcutta, the Isle of France, the Cape, and St. Helena.

“Quite enough! quite enough!” almost screamed out the delighted man of cash. “You shall have the money, sir! you shall have the money! and that right speedily; and along with it many apologies for all this trouble, and detention, and suspicion; and perhaps we may end our acquaintance in a way you little think of—but of that we’ll talk by and by.”

“In the meantime,” I said, “you must sit down and take your dinner with us; though I dare swear it is famously overcooked, since it is a couple of hours past the time it was ordered.”

“No, no!” he cried, “I must run off to catch the money before the chest is locked; besides, I do not like to do things by halves; take your dinner, and you’ll see me here again in due time.”

We did as he advised; ate our dinner, paid the bill, ordered the chaise round, and sat in readiness for a start, the moment the means of greasing the wheels, as my friend aptly called it, should be put in my possession.

Ere long, this most considerate of friends in need reappeared, with the money in separate parcels, one of which held notes, another guineas, and a third change in silver. He made me count it all carefully, and then received from me the bills of exchange, which I signed before him.

“Now, my very kind sir,” said I, holding out my hand, “let me thank you most sincerely for the important service you have done me, and, pray, believe that I shall have no greater pleasure in the world than in being of use to you, if ever it lies in my power.”

“Not so fast! not so fast!” cried he, affecting to refuse the proffered hand, “for I have a shrewd apprehension that, in spite of all these grateful assurances, you will make a demur at the very first, and perhaps the only favour I shall ever ask you, or have the means of asking you in my life.”

“What’s that?” I demanded.

“Neither more nor less,” he replied, laughing, “than that you should now give me the pleasure of your company over a



bowl of punch, which I, who am allowed to be the best mixer in the county of Cork, will concoct in two or three minutes."

"But don't you think," said I, "as I have public and important despatches to carry, and have already lost so much time, that I really ought to be proceeding to Dublin as fast as four horses can carry me?"

"There, now!" he exclaimed, "did not I say that you would make a difficulty about granting me the first and only favour I ever should have occasion to ask you? Besides, I don't at all understand your insinuating that time can ever be lost in drinking good punch; and lastly, but not least, I beg you to bear in mind, that but for me, you must either have been sticking here in the inn, or trudging down to the Cove to beg pecuniary assistance from your Admiral. All which reasons you may lay before my Lords Commissioners for executing the office of Lord High Admiral, if you should be called upon to account for the delay; but out of this room, without discussing a bowl, depend upon it you shall not start! Kelly,"

he exclaimed, "Joe Kelly, man, get the things, and, d'ye hear, the best materials."

So, as there was now left no possible mode of escape, down we sat.

He had promised to complete his incantations in two minutes, but I am confident he occupied a good quarter of an hour in performing this apparently simple operation, upon all the details of which he descanted most learnedly; assuring his company that it was not the quality or even proportions of the magical ingredients, so much as the exact attention to the best method of putting them together, that constituted the grand secret of manufacturing a good bowl. On our expressing some doubts as to the possibility of all this, he pushed the goodly vessel into the middle of the table, drew back his chair, and exclaimed, "I'll let you take a note of every thing I put in, and you may imitate me in all these movements; but I'll bet you ten to one your punch will not be worth drinking." And then he added, almost shouting with delight, as he sipped his own mixture, — "No, sir, no!

It's utterly impossible—I defy you and all the rest of the world combined to make such an elegant mess as that!”

It was indeed glorious—beyond the belief of inexperienced mortals. Much as I had been enchanted by the sublime toddy of the North, I was forced to own, in spite of my intoxicating recollections, then still fresh, after an interval of half-a-dozen busy years, that the punch of the South was the superior tippie of the two.

But what surprised me most, was the extraordinary and sudden change which had been wrought in the appearance of our worthy friend. Instead of the straightforward, dry, calculating, cautious, and painfully formal man of accounts and securities with whom I had been in discussion half the day, here sat a jovial, reckless, hearty, and totally unreserved boon companion, whose whole faculties appeared absorbed in a punch-bowl. This transmutation was begun and completed the very instant our money transactions were ended. The ink of my signature to the bills was not well dry, before he clapped his hands, sung out in a new key

for 'the materials,' as he called them, and commenced the grand brewing, with a degree of energy of character, and certainty of purpose, which, I trust and hope, must, long ere this, have made his fortune.

CHAPTER V.

THE ADMIRALTY LIST.

IN the midst of these gay doings, which were all very well for a time, but rather profitless on the whole, I was suddenly called upon either at once to take advantage of, or altogether to lose, an extremely important opening for promotion. The late Sir Samuel Hood, on being appointed commander-in-chief of the East India station, was applied to by my friends, and agreed to take me with him as one of his lieutenants. His list of protégés, he said, was a long one, and I must come in last ; yet, as he promised to assist me in my turn, after his old followers were provided for, there could not be a moment's doubt on the occasion. In his letters the Admiral dwelt very strongly on the importance of having the name of his young friend, as he was good enough to call me, placed likewise on the Admiralty List.

The purpose of this advice is easily explained. The Admiral on a foreign station is allowed actually to appoint, or promote, to certain vacancies only, any officer whom he pleases, who, of course, must be technically eligible; while on the occurrence of all other vacancies except those which are thus specifically placed at the Admiral's own disposal, he is positively instructed, from home, who are the particular officers to be named, and in what order they shall be taken. Hence this document is called the Admiralty List. People say, and I rather believe with truth, that the fortunate names which figure on it are written in the very autograph of the First Lord, who in this way retains in his own safe keeping the important key which unlocks the door of promotion, so difficult to open, and which so few, alas, can enter of all those poor wretches who claim admission!

In former times, whatever it be now, the Admirals abroad were allowed to appoint officers of their own selection to vacancies occasioned by death, or by the sentence of a court-martial; while they

were instructed to nominate those persons only who stood on the Admiralty List to such vacancies as arose from officers falling sick and invaliding; from the accession of ships captured and purchased into the service; from officers deserting, (which strange event has sometimes happened); or from the squadron being increased by ships built and launched on the station. I do not immediately remember any other source of vacancy. But as these last enumerated are, generally speaking, of much more frequent occurrence than those which fall to the Admiral's peculiar share, by deaths or courts-martial, an officer on the Admiralty List has a proportionately better chance of promotion than one who stands merely on that of the commander-in-chief.

These two lists, that of the Admiral's own private friends, and that of the Admiralty, differ essentially in one material feature of their construction. As a matter of course, the Admiral's list possesses some degree of stability; since a place upon it is generally won by long service under his flag, and retained there by personal

esteem or family connexion. An Admiral's follower, indeed, far from being a term of reproach, is always one of honour, as it implies the confidence and regard of the flag-officer. To get placed, therefore, however near the end, on the good books of a rising Admiral, or one likely to be much employed, is almost a certain road to promotion, provided the merit, or whatever it be, which first led to this distinction be kept up to the proper favour-pitch by steady private and public conduct.

On the other hand, the whole history of the Admiralty List is kept a profound secret, or, what comes nearly to the same thing, is kept strictly out of sight of those it most concerns. It is well known to be formidably intricate in its arrangements, and very slippery in its promises; indeed, from the circumstance of its depending on the fluctuating interests of party politics, and the uncertainty of those calculations which regulate the balance of power amongst the conflicting statesmen of the day, it must be essentially pie-crusty in its texture. For it is sometimes thought in the

political world, that as much may be done (and occasionally a great deal more is attempted), by propitiating antagonists as by rewarding friends. How all this may be in sound principle, I cannot tell; but nothing, in practice, can be more unsteady, or less to be depended upon, as I too well know, than this said Admiralty List. Whether it be, as we hear so often alleged, the single-handed work of the First Lord — the concocted labours of the whole cabinet — or the compound result of casual interference on the part of the First Lord's colleagues at the Admiralty Board, I really know not. Probably all these influences, together with various others, some higher and some lower on the scale of government or opposition, co-operate in producing this naval state paper, so important to the fate and fortunes of many a forlorn, hope-worn midddy and lieutenant. It is perhaps wrong to make use of the word co-operate in the above sentence; for, in all probability, any actual agreement, properly so called, amongst the patronising parties, is a matter quite out of the question. The First Lord's eventual

decision, therefore, must always be what, in mechanics, is termed the resultant of many forces, urging his lordship's pen in different directions. Even this would lead to less difficulty in practice than it probably does, if the political forces alluded to were constant in their direction, or uniform in the degree of their power; but who shall venture to predicate such stability of purpose in public life?

Still, the advantages to an officer are very great of getting his name on this precious little slip of paper, though it be a most unofficial-looking note sheet, as I can testify, from having once incidentally been afforded a glimpse of it, on which, to my bitter despair and horror, my own name was not! And if the Admiral of the station be also a personal friend, that source of favour, of course, adds another string to the young man's bow. Circumstances also occasionally arise which enable an Admiral, who has an officer's interest really at heart, to give him an extra lift at the right moment, and in the right direction, provided his name actually stands on the Admiralty List, even though

it be ever so low down. But these are deep mysteries, the details of which I should not presume to unveil even were I one of the initiated. The bare allusion to them almost makes me tremble, though personally, and for the time, removed from their awful influence.

Before sailing for India, I accordingly took a world of pains to make out this grand point, tormented my poor friends and relations most wofully, and, as I conceived, with eventual good success. A distinct assurance was given to a near connexion of my own, and a member of parliament, that my name would certainly stand on the First Lord's list, to be sent out to India in His Majesty's ship *Volage*, of which I had the further good fortune to be appointed junior lieutenant. A change at the Admiralty was then confidently expected; and I took every care, as I thought, to have it arranged that my name should not be omitted when the new First Lord came into power, and when, of course, another list would be sent to Sir Samuel Hood, then commander-in-chief in India, with the usual transpositions, exclusions,

and additions, incident to all such official changes. I fancied—good easy man—that in place of suffering any loss, I should have the benefit of this fresh shuffle of the political cards, and perhaps have my name brought a good deal nearer to the top of the pack.

Little dreamt I that, in the *mélée* of official patronage and personal favour which shortly afterwards took place at head-quarters, my poor name would be dropped out altogether; still less did I imagine that it would cost me nearly a couple of years of most harassing correspondence, from the distance of ten or twelve thousand miles (half the girth of the globe), to set this apparently trivial matter to rights. The promises made in my behalf, I had then, and still have, every reason to believe were uttered in good faith; but as no record happened to be made at the instant of the engagement, this item, so important to me, so insignificant to all the rest of the world, was swallowed up and lost in the huge ocean of business and patronage with which the unhappy new First Lord of the Admiralty

is always sure to be overwhelmed. The provoking consequence was, that I had the mortification, in India, of seeing sundry good vacancies pass by, one after another, which, had I occupied even the very low place on the fresh list which I had filled on the old one, might have secured my promotion several years sooner than it came. That these broken engagements were entered into in perfect sincerity, was afterwards proved by the instant and full reparation which was made on the omission being pointed out. So that even the evil of this irritating delay, at first so blank and hopeless, was converted, more by judicious management on the part of my friends, than by patience on mine, into a greater good than if the original mistake had never occurred.

The old *Volage*, in which we sailed for India, I am forced to confess, however reluctantly, was one of the least good-looking of all His Majesty's ships and vessels then afloat. But by this time I cared not one fig for the looks of my ship, though, a month or two before, I should have considered it a point of ho-

nour to maintain to the last the beauty of my frigate. I was delighted beyond measure to think that, at length, I was on the right road to promotion ; and this satisfaction was more than doubled by finding the East was the region in which that great prize was to be sought for. No bucanier, indeed, ever “ sought El Dorados in the sky ” with more fervour than I longed to visit those brilliant scenes, with which the youthful fancy is so richly stored by the perusal of the Arabian Nights, and other works of mingled reality and fiction ; delicious stories, in which the most perfect truth of nature and of oriental manners, is interwoven with so many imaginary circumstances of daring love adventures, fierce conflicts, and preternatural agencies, that they irresistibly impart to the countries in which they are supposed to have occurred, a vivid and almost living interest, quite different, both in kind and degree, from any which can ever belong to scenes or incidents nearer home.

There are, I believe, temperaments so unreasonably sanguine, linked to imagina-

tions so fervent, that their previous expectations of India are sadly disappointed by the reality ; and I will not pretend to aver that, in every instance, the pleasure I had promised to myself from visiting the East has come up to what was reckoned upon. But I can say, with perfect truth, that these occasions were so infrequent and unimportant, that I cannot now, by any effort of memory, recall what, or when, or where, they occurred. I succeeded, it is true, after some delay, in obtaining promotion, which was the grand (private) object of the voyage ; and that circumstance may have helped to rose-colour the whole scene. A considerable period was passed in India, however, before this affair was settled ; and I well remember moments when I half dreaded even that long-desired event, from the chance of its taking me away from a country, the wonders, the beauties, and the luxuries of which I found had not been one-hundredth part exhausted by the active investigation of several years. On the contrary, all things appeared to gain only fresh interest the better they were known, and the more they were en-

joyed. It is curious, and every way interesting to observe, indeed, that the genuine novelty of almost every strange land, instead of being diminished or exhausted, is actually augmented by inquiry. With respect to the East in particular, the more closely we examine it, the more we become conscious of viewing a greater number of new objects.

Absolute novelty, it must also be remembered, is not always a source of pleasure. There is generally a degree of confusion, arising, perhaps, from a difficulty of adjusting not only the optical but the mental focus, so as to see the truth, as it were, in correct perspective. The consciousness of ignorance with respect to the natural history, or other details, is also apt sometimes to interfere with the full enjoyment of a totally new scene. There may be wonder, and even great delight, at the first appearance of such things; but their full merits are seldom understood, and, consequently, are not often duly felt, until a certain degree of intercourse has placed us more on a footing of familiarity with them. In this respect,

the analogy between the slight or intimate acquaintance we form with living persons, and that which we come to possess of the scenery and manners of foreign countries, is near enough to serve the purpose of illustration.

Although the men-of-war and their convoy sailed from Spithead on the 25th of March, they did not reach Madeira till the 19th of April. It is always more teasing to be delayed at the outset of a voyage than at any other stage of its course, just as it is mortifying and hurtful to be checked in the commencement of a profession. In both cases, the influence of early disappointment is apt enough to sour the rest of the career; while, in the opposite or successful case, we often see the cheering effects of a few days' fair wind continue for months or years afterwards. Upon this occasion, we had a fine, rattling easterly breeze for eight-and-forty hours after starting, which swept us all, dull sailers and good ones, merrily out of the British channel. This fair start is always a grand affair, whatever succeeds; for if the prevalent westerly wind

catches a ship before the channel is left well behind, she may be driven back to Plymouth or Falmouth, and all the agony of bills, news, leave-taking, and letters, has to be endured over again. Whereas, if she once gets the Lizard Light some fifty leagues astern of her, all these ferreting distractions may be considered at an end. A totally new world — the ‘world of waters,’ — is now entered upon, far beyond the reach even of those long-armed persons, the ‘gentlemen of the press,’ or the startling sound of the postman’s knock, that call which so often sets off the steadiest-going pulse at a gallop! No one, indeed, who has not tried the experiment, can have an idea of the extraordinary and delightful change which a few hours can bring about in this respect, or of the peculiar calm, which, when the ship is once fairly at sea, succeeds to the furious storms, or rather squalls, of the parting scene in port.

This applies especially to every ship going to a remote station, and the transition is rendered still more striking, if, besides her own complement of officers

and men, she is the bearer of ambassadors, governors, generals, or indeed any other description or sex of passengers. A ship of war, as her name implies, is fitted almost exclusively for warlike purposes; and in order to justify this definition, and fulfil her pugnacious destiny, she is supplied with a certain number of guns, and a certain number of men to fight them, together with a proper quantity of stores, provisions, and other fitting munitions, to render these implements of mischief efficient. So exactly, indeed, is the space allotted to these several uses, that whenever any persons come on board, over and above the regular complement required to navigate and fight the ship, or when extra goods and chattels are to be stowed away, the inconvenience, which is always considerable, becomes at such times very great.

This is true, even when the passengers are naval officers, or sailors and marines destined for other ships; for the whole internal area being already taken up, in one way or another, some person, or something, has to move, in order to make room

for the intruding body. This causes no small quantity of general growling ; while the distracted first lieutenant is driven to his very wit's end to devise ways and means to reconcile the different interests of the various and too often conflicting parties committed to his charge. When the intruders are persons subject to naval discipline, the difficulty, though still considerable, is at its minimum, because these professional folks, whether they like it or not, know full well that they must submit not only to the general rules and regulations of the service, but to the particular ordinances or by-laws of the ship on board which they are ordered a passage. They form, in fact, for the time being, part and parcel of the crew, are made to keep watch, and to perform any other duties which may be required of them. They are subject, likewise, to the ordinary ' wiggings,' or wholesome chastisements, by which the well-being of the naval service is kept up.

The case, unhappily, is very different when landsmen take a passage in a man-of-war. If they fall under the description of what Jack calls ' Knobs,' so much the

worse ; for, although men of rank are, in their own persons, among the least exacting of mortals, the most considerate of the feelings and wishes of others, generally speaking the most easily accommodated, and always grateful for sacrifices made with a view to their convenience, yet, unfortunately, these amiable qualities rarely descend to the satellites which accompany and revolve round the Knob in his orbit.

I remember once having orders to receive on board a very small brig of ten guns, a person of such high station, that, even if the whole cabin had been vacated, it would hardly have equalled in dimensions the dressing-room which His Excellency was in the habit of using. In this dilemma, and being extremely anxious to do all honour to so distinguished a guest, I consulted a friend who had long known him, and asked how the great man was likely to put up with the scanty accommodation and indifferent fare I could afford him.

“ Put up with it ! ” cried the chief of the factory’s friend — for this was far away

in China—"why, the Baronet is such a good fellow, that if you thrust him into a cask, and feed him through the bung-hole, he will never complain!"

But no such latitude of complaisance is to be expected from the attendants and other followers of the 'Ta Yin.' On the contrary, they generally give a monstrous deal of extra and needless trouble, fancy every thing is to give way to their good will and pleasure, and, very unlike their principal, make a rule to be satisfied with nothing. They seem to think that His Majesty's naval service has been instituted for the sole purpose of giving ship-room to them and their endless boxes, barrels, hampers, and trunks. The articles of war expressly say, that "every person in or belonging to the fleet shall be subject to the laws and customs used at sea;" but what conceivable discipline can be supposed effective on the mind or body of one of those finest of fine men, the gentleman's gentleman—the all-accomplished valet of a colonial governor—a person not only better looking and better dressed than his master, but one who gives himself

twenty times the airs, and even makes a merit of playing off his most refined graces upon the astonished and subdued first lieutenant? It is in vain for the poor constituted authority to say "This will not do!" The cool assurance of the whole thing, indeed, goes so many degrees beyond the reach of ordinary interference, that we might almost imagine the objects of the mission would be entirely lost were the ambassador's butler to be offended. Whatever comes of the public service, his high mightiness at least must be propitiated!

It accordingly affords considerable and undisguised satisfaction to the Premier, to see these delicate gentlemen horribly sea-sick, when the empire of blue water has once been gained; but in port, the misery and trouble caused by them and their traps, and their assistants, and their sub-assistants, down an endless gradation of domestics, is not to be told. On any occasion of 'fitting foreign,' this is bad enough; but when the destination is India, the evil is aggravated manifold. People who have not visited distant coun-

tries are very apt to fancy that out of England nothing is to be procured; and therefore it becomes requisite, they think, to lay in several years' stock of every possible article they can ever possibly want. Perhaps some moderation in these huge outfits might be introduced, if, by any contrivance, we could explain to the parties concerned that the greater number of such extra articles of food, raiment, and equipage, are not only superfluous, but will almost necessarily be troublesome, unless (by good luck!) they are totally damaged and thrown overboard on the passage.

If, however, it be a hopeless task to make the Governor understand the inutility of carrying such loads of things, which are to be procured often at a less cost, and equally good, at the place he is going to, it is a still vainer hope to convince him that his regiment of followers will prove a great deal worse than useless, and that they will be a never-ending source of plague to him and to every one else on the voyage; or that, when he reaches his destination, they will all be superseded by a

Tartar sort of incursion of sable spirits, under the name of dubashes, hookah burdars, gora wallas, and fifty others, the stupidest of whom will outmatch in usefulness the most crack footman in his train.

Nevertheless, in spite of all these and numberless other difficulties and obstructions, some private, some official, the good ship does, by a kind of miracle, at last get ready for sea, or what is called ready; though I verily believe, if she were to remain six months in port after the day on which she was reported ready to proceed, there would always be something to do with the dock-yard, the victualling wharf, or the gun wharf. The daily post too, and that perennial epidemic the periodical press, lend their aid to worry the officers; while tavern-keepers, tailors, and washerwomen, to say nothing of weeping friends and relatives, or broken-hearted connexions, co-operate to destroy all peace of mind, and make every one on board pray with the heartiest sincerity for a good strong puff of easterly wind to waft him far beyond the reach of these multifarious distractions.

Oh the joy! the relief unspeakable! of feeling one's self fairly under weigh, and of seeing the white cliffs of Old England sink fast in the north-eastern horizon right to windward! Let the concocters of romances and other imaginary tales say what they please of the joys of returning home; give me the happiness of a good departure, and a boundless world of untried enjoyments ahead. If a man be out of debt and out of love, or only moderately involved in either of these delicate predicaments; if he have youth and health and tolerable prospects, a good ship under his foot, a good officer above him, and good messmates to serve with, why need he wear and tear his feelings about those he leaves behind? Or rather, why need he grieve to part from those who are better pleased to see him vigorously doing his duty than idling in other people's way at home? Or wherefore should he sigh to leave those enjoyments in which he cannot honourably participate till he has earned his title to them by hardy service?

On the other hand, who is there so insensible as not to feel the deepest appre-

hension—very often, as I know by sad experience, almost devoid of a single drop of pleasure—on returning from a long and distant voyage? How can he tell in what condition he will now find the friends from whom he parted so long ago, and of whom he may, perhaps, not have heard a word for many a long season of anxiety? Is it not too probable that his busy fancy will conjure up many more images of death and sickness, of losses and sorrows, than it can paint pictures of health, good fortune, and happiness? And will it ever happen, if the interval of absence have been long, that some of these gloomy forebodings will not be realized? May it not prove but too often the case, that those who, from being the dearest to us, we had ingeniously and fondly exempted from the fatal doom, are its first victims? Indeed, I have on these occasions been grieved and irritated at myself for canvassing beforehand, in my own mind, and in spite of every effort to change the current of my thoughts, which of all the friends in whom I was interested I could consent to lose with the least regret! And when

the pile of accumulated letters is first placed in our hands after a voyage, with what sickening eagerness do we not turn from the superscription to discover the colour of the seal?

It happened once to me to be nearly fifteen months without receiving a single line from home, or seeing an English newspaper. On reaching the port of rendezvous, I found that as the ship I commanded was the only man-of-war in the harbour, there devolved upon me an immense load of official business requiring immediate and careful attention. All this I learned on my way to the consul's office, where a huge budget of letters was delivered to me. My first impulse, naturally, was to tear away the envelopes, and dive into the secrets of these domestic despatches; but I paused on detecting several ominous-looking patches of black wax, and, thrusting them all into a drawer, did not open one till next day. Officially considered, it was well I imposed this restraint upon my curiosity; for the fatal news these letters contained must have seriously interfered with the exclusive pro-

fessional attention which the nature of the service required me to bestow upon various public matters admitting of no delay ; whereas, in regard to the private intelligence, a single day, added to so many months, signified nothing.

After leaving Spithead, our two days of fair wind were enough to take us clear of the channel, and well off the bank of soundings, far beyond the danger of return. A tolerable spell of bad weather then came on, which in one sense was of essential service, by contributing greatly to assist the first lieutenant's arrangements, though it discomfited most grievously the apple-pie order of those disturbers of his peace, the dandified, shore-going, long-coated gentry before alluded to, and whom the sailors, in their coarse but graphic vocabulary, call ' dog robbers,' from their intercepting the broken meat on its way to the kennel from their master's table. Our gale of wind, indeed, was no gale to speak of ; but as the sea rose, and a heavy press of canvass laid the creaking old barky well over on her broadside, many of the beautifully piled

boxes, the well-packed portmanteaus, the polished dressing-cases and writing-desks, the frail glass, crockery, and other finery, fetched way, and went rattling, smash! dash! right into the lee scuppers. Along with these dislodged goods and chattels went down, from time to time, several of the astonished proprietors of the half-ruined property, partly actuated by the praiseworthy but vain hope of arresting the course of gravitation and the momentum of a good heavy sea, and partly without the power of choice. In the next instant, the great bulk of these materials were jerked back again, nearly to their original situation, by that peculiar movement, so trying to unpractised nerves, called a lurch to windward. To unpractised ears, the sounds on this occasion lead one to suppose the ship is going to pieces; while the cries for help from the broken-shinned sea-sick landsmen, the bawling for cleats and lashings from the mate of the decks, the thumping of hammers, and the loud laugh of the light-hearted middies, enchanted with the uproar, make a fine concert. The sedative effect of two or

three hours of this work exceeds fresh-water belief; so that in a day or two, Messrs. Neptune, Boreas, First Lieutenant, and Co., have re-established their legitimate authority so completely, that neither butler, cook, gentleman's gentleman, nor any other passenger, ever afterwards ventures to indulge in those liberties which, at first coming on board, he fancied might be taken with impunity.

Our amiable guest, indeed, the late Sir Evan Nepean, governor of Bombay, I must do him the justice to say, was the least troublesome of passengers. The rest of our party, too, though squeezed together in a manner every way different from their usual habits, made themselves so agreeable, not only by their conversation and accommodating manners, but by their constant desire to compensate to us for the derangement which their intrusion, as they were pleased to call it, made in our comforts, that we were heartily sorry to part with them.

Of Madeira, enough, in all conscience, has already been written; so that I shall content myself with mentioning, that we

there fell in with a very intelligent person, an Italian count, who had been travelling in France, Spain, and in both the Americas. What he said of South America was pronounced by us all to be utterly absurd, and so full of prejudice as to be worth nothing. “The people of those countries,” he remarked, “are now (1812) doing themselves nothing but mischief; and, generally speaking, the South American insurgents have but a few faint notions of liberty; so that, if they succeed in gaining their independence, they will speedily set about cutting one another’s throats; for all they know about freedom, or about political principles, is drawn from the worst parts of the French revolution.”

For my own part I feel called upon, in some measure, to record these judicious observations, from having myself, ten years afterwards, though with the advantage of a still more extensive range of observation than this traveller, taken a very different view of the subject, but one which, I am sorry to say, was not nearly so correct. I certainly was deceived, by what I saw in South America, into a belief that the new

states might enjoy more political happiness, and be less subjected to the caprice of despotic authority, when self-governed, as it is called, than when under the administration of the mother country, bad as that was. I am now, however, obliged to acknowledge, and I make the recantation with sorrow, that the change has turned out greatly for the worse, inasmuch as the colonists have substituted for the despotic authority of one head, the far deeper and more irremediable curse, the tyranny of that many-headed monster, the populace. They have likewise practically shewn, on a scale sufficiently extensive and varied to satisfy every reasonable observer, that mere animal liberty, or the uncontrolled power of adopting, and putting into nominal action, a liberal form of government, however complete in theory, contributes scarcely any thing to the establishment of genuine freedom. The example, at all events, is most wholesome, from its helping to shew, that revolutions, whether bloody or otherwise, if made suddenly, will seldom place things in as favourable a position as they occupied be-

fore the convulsion. The practical inference from these facts and reasonings seems to be, that any political ameliorations, even of abuses really felt to be such, ought always to be made by very slow, and almost imperceptible degrees. It is perhaps even true, that the excellence and eventual utility of all such variations in the machinery of an established constitution are pretty safely measured by their apparent slowness; and if so, there is probably no paradox in asserting, that when the alteration of any old political institution is altogether unseen by the casual observer, its constitution may really be undergoing the very maximum of beneficial modification.

The concluding part of the count's prophetic view is as follows, and I give it with pleasure, for two reasons; first, because it is yet unaccomplished; and, secondly, because it exactly coincides with my own views. "Whether," said he, "the South Americans are to form a connexion with Spain or not, they must, in order to their having the least chance of enjoying rational civil liberty, come ulti-

mately under the monarchical form of government, and abandon, as totally unsuited to them, and to the objects in view, those republican institutions, at the establishment of which they are now aiming."

CHAPTER VI.

THE TROPICAL REGIONS AT SEA.

THERE sailed along with us in the Volage, from Spithead, the Princess Caroline 74, and the Theban frigate, to aid in protecting a fleet of the following ships of the East India Company :—the Elphinstone, Wexford, Cirencester, Marquess of Huntly, Bombay Castle, and Alnwick Castle, all for China direct. As these ships were of the largest class, well manned, well commanded, and were likewise pretty well armed, and got up to look like men-of-war, our force had not only an imposing aspect, but, in the event of coming in contact with an enemy, even in considerable strength, we should either have beaten him outright, or baffled him by crippling his spars in such a way as to prevent his interrupting our voyage.

There is one signal instance on record in which a fleet of East India Company's

ships, unassisted by any professed men-of-war, actually beat off a French squadron of very powerful vessels. These striking incidents, peeping out from time to time, shew what is called the true blood of the animal, and are extremely valuable, from proving how essential it is that an officer in command should ‘Never say die while there is a shot in the locker!’—a pithy old phrase, which will apply to many situations in life, civil as well as military. Had the gallant and judicious East India commander alluded to, Sir Nathaniel Dance, cried out ‘I die!’ when the French Admiral Linois, and his squadron, consisting of the *Marengo*, a line-of-battle ship of 84 guns, and the *Belle Poule* and *Semillante* frigates, each of 44, bore down on the China fleet, not less than six millions of English property, and some of the noblest trading ships that float on the ocean, must have been carried into the Isle of France.

This memorable affair took place near Pulo Aor, in the China seas, and by a very interesting, and no doubt useful coincidence, on the 14th of February,

1804, the seventh anniversary of the glorious action off Cape St. Vincent. Had the enemy only known the real force of his opponents, which he most certainly ought to have found out before he quitted them, the bold front these ships put forward might indeed have served them nothing. A less resolute man than Captain Dance might have said, this good fortune was hardly to be calculated upon; but it is the duty of a commander, at all times and under all circumstances, to afford himself every possible chance, and never to give up while there is one of these chances left.

A useful chapter in naval history and tactics could be written on the defence of convoys, by which it might perhaps be made manifest, that a determined bearing, accompanied by a certain degree of force, and a vigorous resolution to exert that force to the utmost, would, in most cases, save the greater part of the convoy, even against powerful odds. In the well-known instance of the sacrifice of his ship, in a contest in which he was from the first sure to be overpowered, Captain

Richard Budd Vincent gained sufficient time for most of his flock of merchant ships to escape.

This gallant officer, in February 1805, in the *Arrow* of 18 twenty-four pounders, ably supported by Captain Arthur Farquhar, in the *Acheron* bomb, carrying not half that number, actually engaged two large French frigates, mounting in all 90 guns and 1300 men, while the English force was only 26 guns and 90 men. The damage and delay caused to the enemy by this spirited resistance enabled the convoy to disperse, and all to get off but three, out of thirty-two. The English ships did not strike till they were so much cut up that one sunk immediately afterwards, and the other was burned by the captors as useless.

On the occasion of our voyage in 1812, however, the fortitude and skill of our East India ships were put to no such proof, as our most interesting evolutions were confined to the interchange of good dinners; for your Indiamen know as well how to eat, drink, and be merry, as to fight, if need be. Their nominal, and indeed their

chief business, is to trade; but their trading is a widely different thing from that of the ordinary merchant service. The East India Company's officers are bred up, in many respects, like naval men; and, as they are taught to act, they learn to feel, in the same manner. Being sprung from as good a stock as the officers of the brother service of the Navy, they possess a kindred gentlemanlike spirit, and are in every respect, as far as their means go, perfectly suitable allies in battle. I allude chiefly to their warlike equipments; but in almost every thing else they are also essentially the same, save in the circumstance of actual trafficking. Unfortunately, manage it as we will, the habit of buying and selling goods must have a tendency, in spite of his best exertions, to detach an officer's thoughts from those high and delicate refinements which constitute the characteristic distinction between the art of war and the art of gain. Accordingly the two things, when joined together, make rather an agreeable than a profitable mixture. No men, in any service, fight better than the officers of the

East India Company's ships, when fairly brought to the scratch ; but it is their chief business, or, we may rather call it, their bounden duty, as much as possible to avoid action ; and their habits leading them to seek protection from others, rather than to reckon on their own strength, or to court action for its own sake, the wholesome spirit of pugnacity is not duly cherished. On the other hand, as their trading concerns are entangled by these nautico-military arrangements, and their thoughts always engaged, more or less, with the crabbed intricacies of discipline, and the maintenance of that sort of man-of-war state and show which are often thought to be amongst the best proofs of good order, their mercantile bargains, both in respect to sales and to purchases, are, I fear, none of the best for themselves, poor fellows !

In fine weather there is naturally much agreeable intercourse between the different ships in such a fleet as ours ; for East India Company's folks, whether of the land or the sea service, understand right well the jolly art of good cheer wherever

they go ; be it on terra firma, or on the high seas, bivouacking on the lofty Himalayas, or feasting in the bungaloes of the flat Delta of the Ganges, it is all one to them. So that, during our whole voyage, there scarcely occurred a day on which, in the course of the morning, if the sea were tolerably smooth, and the wind not too strong, and the weather otherwise agreeable, the dinner-invitation signal was not displayed from the commodore, or from some of his flock. When there was a breeze, and the ships were making way through the water, some technical address was necessary to avoid delay. This will easily be understood, without going into minute details, when it is remembered, that there must always in a convoy be found certain ships which sail worse than others, and that, although these tubs, as they are most deservedly called, crowd all their canvass, the rest are obliged to shorten sail in order to keep them company ; as Lightfoot, in the fairy tale, was obliged to tie his feet in the race. If it be the commodore who gives the dinner, he either heaves to, while the boats of the

different captains come on board, or he edges down to the different ships in succession, passes them at the distance of a quarter of a cable's length, picks up his guests, and resumes his station a-head, or to windward, or wherever it may suit him to place himself so as best to guard his charge. If any of the fast sailers have occasion to heave to, either before or after dinner, to lower down or to hoist up the boat which carries the captain backwards and forwards to the ship in which the entertainment is given, and in consequence of this detention any way has been lost, that ship has only to set a little more sail that she may shoot ahead, and regain her position in the line.

The unfortunate bad sailers of all fleets or convoys that ever swam, as may well be supposed, are daily and hourly execrated in every note of the gamut; and it must be owned, that the detention they cause, when a fine fresh breeze is blowing, is excessively provoking to all the rest, and mortifying to themselves. Sometimes the progress of one haystack of a vessel is so slow that a fast-sailing ship is directed to

take her in tow, and fairly lug her along. As this troublesome operation requires for its proper execution no small degree of nautical knowledge, as well as dexterity, and must be performed in the face of the whole squadron, it is always exposed to much sharp criticism. The celerity with which sail is set, or taken in, by the respective ships, or the skill with which broken spars are shifted, likewise furnish such abundant scope for technical table-talk, that there is seldom any want of topic in the convoy. Sailors, indeed, are about as restless as the element on which they float; and their hands are generally kept pretty full by the necessity of studying the fluctuating circumstances of wind and weather, together with the due attention to what is properly called the navigation, or that branch of their art which consists in discovering the ship's place on the globe, and shaping the course to be steered after the exact position has been determined.

These, and various other occupations not now touched upon, served to give a high degree of interest to this Indian

voyage, which, to most of us, was the first in its way, and filled up our time, as we sailed along with a flowing sheet over the broad Atlantic, much more completely and agreeably than can be well conceived. The mere circumstance of having to pass successively and quickly through a number of different climates, first in the order of increasing warmth, and then in the reverse order of increasing cold, was of itself most striking. The change of latitude being the chief cause of these phenomena, a succession of astronomical variations became necessarily attendant upon the progress of the voyage; and although all of these were easily explained by reasonings which every one on board was accustomed to admit as sound, yet the actual, practical exhibition, as it may be termed, of the truths of astronomical science failed not to strike the unfamiliarised imagination as both wonderful and beautiful.

When we sailed from England the weather was very cold, raw, and uncomfortable; and although, fortunately, we had a couple of days' fair wind at starting, we

were met in the very chops of the channel by hard-hearted southerly and south-westerly winds, which tried our patience sorely. On the evening of the tenth day we caught a glimpse of the north coast of Spain; and the rugged shore of Galicia was the last which most of us saw of Europe for many years. It was not till after a fortnight's hard struggling against these tiresome south-westerners that we anchored in Funchal Roads, Madeira, having by the way dropped several of our convoy. These stray sheep came in during the few days we remained to refresh ourselves at this most charming of resting places. After nearly a week's enjoyment, we proceeded on our course to the southward, and within three days came in sight of Palma, the most northern of the Canary Island group. It was thirty miles distant in the south-east quarter. Teneriffe, the sea 'monarch of mountains,' lay too far off for us to perceive even his 'diadem of snow,' which at that season (April), I presume, he always wears. Some years after the period in question, when I paid him a visit, in the month of August,

the very tip-top was bare, and the thermometer at 70°.

Under more favourable circumstances we might possibly have seen Teneriffe from the Volage, for our distance was not above a hundred miles. This, however, it must be owned, is a long way to see the land, unless it form a continuous ridge of great elevation, like the Andes, and even then to be distinguished well, it requires to be interposed between a bright sky and the ship. At daybreak, and for about half an hour before sunrise, if the weather be clear, even sharp peaks, like the cone of Teneriffe, may be seen with a degree of distinctness, which is very remarkable when viewed from the distance of a hundred miles and upwards, as I have several times experienced when navigating in the Pacific. But when the full splendour of the sun's light begins to fill the air, these gigantic forms gradually fade away amongst the clouds, or melt into the sky, even when no clouds are visible. I have likewise been told, that in sailing directly away from Teneriffe (or other high insulated peaks), and keeping the eye pretty con-

stantly fixed in the proper direction, it may be retained in sight at much greater distance than it can be discovered on approaching. I am disposed to consider this very probable, but have never had a good opportunity of trying the experiment.

It was late in April, as we were stealing slowly past these distant Canary Islands, when the first real puff of the Trade-wind caught our sleeping sails, and made the braces, halyards, and all the other ropes connected with the yards, crack again. This breeze, by giving us a fore-taste of what we were to enjoy for upwards of a thousand leagues across the torrid zone a-head of us, served more effectually to detach our thoughts from European interests than any thing which had occurred since our leaving England. At the very moment, however, when we were chuckling at this disentanglement of our feelings from domestic anxieties, and all the varied agitation of home concerns, we observed a ship crossing our path at some distance. Signal being made to chase, we instantly darted off from the convoy

to examine the stranger, who proved to be an English ship from Lisbon. We hailed, and asked, "What news?"

"Badajoz has fallen," replied the other, "after a terrible siege."

This was received with a general buzz of joyous congratulation along the decks. In answer to further questions, we were told of some three or four thousand men killed and wounded in the trenches and breach. Then, indeed, the glorious intelligence was greeted by three jolly huzzas from every ship in the convoy!

Nothing so startling as this occurred to us again, but the serenity of our thoughts was in some degree interrupted, a few days afterwards, by the north-easterly Trade-wind dying away, and a gentle south-wester springing up in its place. This occurred in latitude $25\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ N., where, according to our inexperienced conception of these singular winds, we ought to have found a regular breeze from the very opposite quarter! Nor was it till long afterwards that I learned how much the force and direction of the Trade-winds are liable to modification by the particular position

which the sun occupies in the heavens ; or how far the rotatory motion of the earth, combined with the power which the sun possesses of heating certain portions of the circumambient air, are the regulating causes of the Trades, Monsoons, and, indeed, of all the other winds by which we are driven about. It is by no means an easy problem in meteorology to shew how these causes act in every case ; and perhaps it is one which will never be so fully solved as to admit of very popular enunciation applicable to all climates. In the most important and useful class of these aërial currents, called, *par excellence*, and with so much picturesque truth, ‘the Trade-winds,’ the explanation is not difficult. But before entering on this curious and copious theme, I feel anxious to carry our convoy fairly across the tropical regions, after which an account of the Trades will be better understood.

I have just mentioned that the changes of temperature, on a voyage to India, are most remarkable. We set sail, for instance, in the month of March, when

it was bitterly cold in England ; then we came off the coast of Spain, where it was a little more moderate ; next to Madeira, which is always agreeable. Then we passed the Canaries ; after which we sailed over the tropic of Cancer, and got well toasted in the torrid zone ; steered down upon the equinoctial line, passed the tropic of Capricorn, and again became conscious of the weakened influence of the sun ; till, at length, off the Cape of Good Hope, we were once more nipped with the cold. Anon, having rounded the south point of Africa, we put our heads towards the line, and a second time, within a few weeks, emerged from the depth of winter into the height of summer.

The proximate cause of all these vicissitudes was, of course, our approach towards and removal from the direct influence of the great source of light and heat. At one time, the sun, even at noon, was seen creeping stealthily along, low down in the horizon, at another his jolly countenance was blazing away right overhead. On the 5th of May, when our latitude was $17\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ N., the sun's declina-

tion was $16\frac{1}{4}^{\circ}$ N., his centre being only one degree from our zenith : shadows we had none, any more than the unhappy wretch in the wild German story, who, for a punishment, was deprived of this honourable accompaniment. On that day we saw St. Antonio, the north-westernmost of the Cape de Verde Islands, the summit of which is about seven thousand feet above the sea.

On the next day I well remember going on deck with a certain flutter of spirits, to see, for the first time in my life, the sun to the northward, and moving through the heavens from right to left, instead of from left to right. No one doubts that the earth is round ; yet these conspicuous and actual proofs of its rotundity always amuse the fancy, and frequently interest the judgment, almost as much as if they were unexpected. The gradual rise, night after night, of new stars and new constellations, belongs to a still higher order of curiosity ; for it not merely places well-known objects in strange positions, but brings totally new objects of contemplation before our eyes, and leads us to

feel, perhaps more strongly than upon any other occasion, the full gratification which novelty on the grandest scale is capable of producing. I shall never forget the impatience with which I have often watched the approach of darkness after a long day's run to the south, knowing that I, in a few moments, was to discover celestial phenomena heretofore concealed from my view.

After slanting through the north-east Trade-wind, we reached that well-known but troublesome stage in the voyage, so difficult to get over, called the Variables. This region has acquired its title from the regular Trades not being found there, but in their place unsteady breezes, long calms, heavy squalls, and sometimes smart winds from the southward and south westward. These Variables, which sorely perplex all mariners, even those of most experience, while they drive young navigators almost out of their senses, are not less under the dominion of the causes which regulate those great perennial breezes the Trades, blowing to the northward and southward of them. Their laws, however,

are not quite so readily understood, and consequently are not so easily allowed for in the practice of navigation. I have even seen people as greatly provoked with their occurrence, as if the course of nature had been intermitted for the express purpose of bothering them. Such impatient voyagers will not condescend to recollect, that their own confined observation, or shallow knowledge of the facts, is rather more likely to be the cause of their disappointment, than that dame Nature should have halted in her operations merely to vex their worships. On the other hand, many persons, besides navigators, misled by the seduction of names, rush headlong into very unsubstantial generalisations; and, upon the strength of a few unconnected facts, lay down what they call laws of nature, which they are mightily astonished to find will not always square with actual observation. Such reasoners, instead of being delighted with new facts, are vexed to meet with exceptions, as they call them, and are very slow to confess that the error lies with themselves. Still less are they willing to allow, that, if they had studied

the subject more attentively, they might have profited by these very exceptions, and advanced their voyage, instead of retarding it. There seems, indeed, to be a strange propensity in the human mind, at one time to despise authority, and at another to yield too implicitly to its assertions; at one time to guess at the secrets of nature, without inquiring what others have done; and at another to relinquish all independent judgment, and assume the facts to be as stated, without investigating the value of the authority on which they rest, or seeking to know whether the recorded instances be applicable or not to the case in hand.

When we actually encounter, on the spot, and for the first time, a crowd of new circumstances, of which, previously, we have only known the names, or have merely heard them described by others, we feel so much confused and bewildered, that we fly eagerly to the nearest authority to help us out of the scrape. It generally happens, in these cases, that the reference does not prove very satisfactory, because the actual circumstances with which we

are engaged are rarely similar in all their bearings to those with which we compare them ; and when this is not the case, the blindfold method of proceeding in the beaten path is very apt to mislead.

As an illustration of this kind of deception, it may be stated, that navigators, whose actual experience has not extended to the tropical regions, are very apt, in poring over the voyages of others, to acquire, insensibly, a very confident notion that each of the great Trade-winds blowing on different sides of the Line, (the North-east and the South-east by name) are quite steady in their direction ; and that, in the equatorial interval which lies between them, only calms and light winds are to be found. Moreover, inexperienced persons generally believe this interval to be equally divided by the equator, and that both the breadth and the position of this calm region continue unchanged throughout the whole year. Now, here are four important mistakes — important both in a scientific and in a practical point of view. For 1st, Not calms and squalls alone, but occasionally fresh and

steady winds, are found between the Trades; 2dly, The belt called the Variables is by no means equally divided by the equator; neither, 3dly, is that belt stationary in its position; nor, 4thly, is it uniform in its breadth. It will thence be easily understood, even by a person who has never quitted one of the midland counties in England, and to whom the ocean is an unseen wonder, that a new comer to the tropical regions, his head loaded with these false views, will be very apt to mistake his own ignorance for the caprice of Nature, and perhaps call out, as I once heard a man do, in all the agony of impatience caused by a protracted head wind,—“Now, this is really scandalous usage of the clerk of the weather office!” The scandal, however, lay not so much with the clerk’s usage as with his own limited knowledge—for if at the very time of his imprecation, instead of abusing the foul wind, and keeping his yards braced sharp up, and making his sails stand like a board, the grumbler had known how to take advantage of it, and had kept away two or three points, set his

fore-top-mast studding-sail, and flanked across or through the breeze which he had in vain tried to beat against, he might not only have saved his temper, but have made his passage in half the time.

Navigation, after all, probably more than most other pursuits, requires, for its right performance, a constant mixture of theory and practice. The purely practical man, if his experience be extensive, and his voyages be repeatedly made over the same ground, will unquestionably have an advantage over the purely theoretical navigator. There is no necessity, however, that speculation and experience should be either disjoined, or combined in equal portions. A small chain of sound reasoning will serve to arrange and bind together a large pile of properly observed details. Actual facts form the rude materials of our professional knowledge; the skill of the mathematician supplies the theory by direction of which the edifice is built up. In ordinary navigation, a comparatively limited allowance of mathematics, and an acquaintance with the more general principles of astronomy, furnish what may be

termed the plan and elevation of our structure ; but experience alone can teach us how to apply these designs to useful account.

I am not sure that, in the whole range of this extensive subject, there could be picked out an instance more in point to what has just been said, than these interesting phenomena of the Trade-winds, which, if I mistake not, possess considerable interest to all classes of persons, whether professional or otherwise. To sailors of every age and rank, and especially to naval officers, an acquaintance with the laws which regulate these extraordinary aërial currents must be of great importance. For a commander may be ordered, at a moment's warning, either to carry his own ship, or to lead a squadron, or to guard a convoy, from the northern to the southern hemisphere, or perhaps from the West to the East Indies. If, however, he have not previously made a tropical voyage or two, or have not studied the subject in its genuine theoretical spirit, as well as in the log-books of his predecessors, he may expect to find himself most

wofully embarrassed, both on entering and on leaving the Trades.

A captain of a man-of-war in charge of a convoy of India ships, it is true, may, at any time, consult the experienced commanders of the ships under his orders as to the best method of making the passage, generally; or he may call them on board on reaching the Variables, to have their opinion, and, if he pleases, take their advice as to the quickest method of getting over this difficult stage in the journey. But I think it will occur to every officer, that in such a proceeding, however necessary it may sometimes be for the advancement of the public service, there must be a certain loss of dignity; and with it, some relinquishment of that authority which all experience shews is essential to the proper exercise of command.

Neither officers nor men throughout any fleet ever put forth their whole strength, unless they have the fullest confidence in the person placed at their head. On the other hand, if their confidence in their leader be complete, they fling their whole souls and bodies into the effort, and, under

the inspiring influence of unbounded faith, often perform deeds which are equally surprising to themselves and to others. We all know how well this principle worked on the great scale in fleets under Nelson, and, in a smaller degree, but in a spirit hardly less remarkable, on board single ships under Lord Cochrane.

Without exhausting this branch of the question, it must be evident to every one, that the exact knowledge required for getting quickly over the more difficult parts of an Indian voyage, may often prove of the utmost consequence in a national point of view. Suppose, for instance, a war breaks out unexpectedly between France and England, and two frigates, equally good sailers, are despatched, by the countries respectively, to spread the news in the Eastern hemisphere. Conceive them to start simultaneously, one from Cherbourg, the other from Plymouth, let them both reach the edge of the Variables together, and also lose the north-east Trade-wind on the same day. So far, two equally good officers will probably run abreast of one another. But if one of

the captains, without being personally acquainted with the numerous varieties which occur in those low latitudes, has yet a sound knowledge of the general laws by which the fluctuations in the winds are regulated, while the other has merely read about them in log-books, and has no theoretical key to help him to unlock the secrets of the perplexing anomalies he will inevitably encounter, the chances surely are, that the career of the two ships will become from that hour essentially different. If, to the theoretical knowledge which I have supposed one of the officers to possess, he adds even a slight personal acquaintance with the facts, from having studied them on a former voyage, his advantage over his rival will be still greater. At all events, that frigate commanded by the officer possessed of most philosophical knowledge of the causes which put the air in motion, would, in all probability, double the Cape many days, perhaps weeks before the other, and thus be enabled to scatter the important intelligence over the whole Indian ocean in time to prevent great disasters ;

or, by striking the first blow, to accomplish active warlike purposes of the highest importance to his country.

Independently of all such public objects concerned in these inquiries, which give them a degree of professional importance, and almost render their study a part of every officer's duty, there appears to exist a very general interest in the Trade-winds, sufficiently strong to engage the attention even of unprofessional persons when the subject is placed intelligibly before them. These vast currents of air, which sweep round and round the globe in huge strips of more than twelve hundred miles in width, are in a manner forced, more or less, on every one's notice, from contributing essentially to that boundless interchange of the productions of distant regions by which modern times are so agreeably distinguished from the old.

The great Monsoons, again, of the Indian and China oceans play almost as important a part in this grand nautical drama along the coasts of those remote countries. All these great phenomena, and every one of their numerous minor

varieties, will be found, upon a little inquiry, to obey precisely the same laws as their less fluctuating brethren the mighty Trades. That theory, indeed, would be but a shabby one which did not include both ; and hence, it may be useful to suggest to my young friends, springs one of the chief delights of science when its study is conducted in a proper spirit. If the pursuit of truth be engaged in with sincerity, phenomena apparently the most opposite in character—for example, winds in different parts of the earth, but in the same latitude, blowing in totally different directions at the same season of the year—will always prove in the end illustrative of one another, and of their common theory.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TRADE-WINDS.

THERE are few things more curious in the history of human knowledge than the establishment of extensive errors as to matters of fact, and the perverse tenacity with which they retain their hold on the public mind. In some cases, it would almost seem that the pleasure which springs from genuine philosophical inquiry is subordinate to that which arises from the indolent process of taking things for granted. This, among numerous other instances, applies peculiarly to the phenomena of the Trade-winds, respecting which many erroneous ideas are generally entertained. To professional men these fallacies are calculated to prove extremely mischievous; while even to persons not directly connected with the sea, the existence of error may often be injurious. And although it is not very easy to explain these things

in a popular way, I shall attempt, in language as little technical as possible, to give a description of the facts as they really are found by those who have visited the regions where the phenomena prevail. If, however, after perusing it, the general reader, as he is pleasantly called, shall relapse into his original heresy, I shall still hope that my young nautical friends will keep a firmer hold of truths, which may one day very essentially aid them in their professional career; and as it is for their use, chiefly, that this chapter is written, I shall make no apologies either for its length, or its elementary nature.

A correct, and, at the same time, an extensive knowledge of all the facts connected with the Trade-winds, is to be acquired, I suspect, only by personal experience. But the main characteristics may easily be described; and these, when viewed side by side with such theoretical explanations as are agreeable to physical laws, which have been found applicable to all cases, may serve to enable even inexperienced navigators to predict pretty nearly, and often with the greatest prac-

tical advantage, what winds they are likely to meet with.

The great belt of the earth's surface, nearly three thousand miles in width, lying between the tropics (from $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ north to $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ south latitude), is the chief region of the Trade-winds; though in some parts of the world they extend to the latitude of 28° both north and south of the equator; while at other places well within the tropics, and even close to the line, totally different winds prevail. It is only in the open parts of the Pacific and Atlantic oceans that the true Trade-winds blow. In the Indian and China seas, and in many other portions of the great tropical belt, periodical winds, called Monsoons, are found. These shifting Trades exact the closest study from the practical navigator, in consequence of their extensive variety and seeming complication. But they are not less deserving the attention of merely curious inquirers, from the beautiful manner in which these modifications of the regular breezes obey the same general laws which direct the grand phenomena of the Trades. Indeed, the most extensive

observation serves only to link the whole into one harmonious chain or series of explanations, equally delightful to the philosopher, useful to seamen, and grateful, we may suppose, to every right mind in every station, from exhibiting one of the grandest specimens of the uniformity and exquisite adaptation of Nature, even in those departments miscalled 'inconstant' where she is supposed to be most capricious.

The only general assertion perhaps that can safely be made with respect to the Trade-winds is, that they blow, more or less, from the eastern half of the compass towards the western. On the north side of the equator, the North-east Trade-wind blows; and on the south side, the South-east Trade-wind. These two names have undoubtedly contributed to mystify the subject, by naturally suggesting to the imagination currents of air blowing respectively from the north-east and the south-east, or at an angle of 45° with the meridian. And I have even seen sailors—old sailors, too—quite surprised, and rather provoked, when they have encoun-

tered very different winds in those parts of their voyage where, being misled by the force of names alone, they had taught themselves to expect a regular breeze from a particular quarter. But, in point of fact, the Trade-winds do very seldom blow directly from north-east and south-east; neither are they uniform in their direction on the same spot at different seasons of the year, nor is their strength uniform from month to month. I may add, that the equatorial limits, or bounding lines, of the Trades are not steadily confined to the same latitude. In short, so far from these winds being perfectly fixed in direction, force, and position, as most people on shore, and too many sailors imagine, they are subject to very considerable mutations, dependent on the position of the sun. Their vast importance in commerce need only be mentioned; yet it is also well to recollect, that their nautical value, as well as philosophical curiosity, turns mainly on their uniformity, which, in spite of all the fluctuations alluded to, gives them a very distinctive character.

In Dr. Young's chart of the winds, pub-

lished in his Natural Philosophy, plates XLII. and XLIII., vol. i., the Trade-winds are represented as blowing nearly from the north-east and south-east till they approach the equator, when they are made to take a graceful bend, and flow along in lines parallel to the equinoctial line. Under the general head of Winds, vol. ii. p. 455, Dr. Young states from Robertson, that “near the equator the Trade blows from due east.” This is very wide of the truth, as I shall presently shew, and also endeavour to explain why.

Hadley, in a valuable paper on the “Cause of the general Trade-winds,” in the Philosophical Transactions for 1735, falls into similar errors in stating some of the facts; which is the more curious, since his theory is unquestionably the true one. He states, that “these winds, as they come nearer the equator, will become stronger, and more and more easterly, and be due east at the equator itself, according to experience.”*

* Philosophical Transactions abridged, vol. viii. page 21.

Where Hadley obtained his 'experience' he does not tell; but certain it is, that no sailor who ever crossed the equinoctial line could possibly have furnished him with two of his principal assertions in the above sentence. In the first place, the Trades are not strongest near the equator; and in the next, when they reach that district, they never blow along it, or in a parallel direction, but almost always at right angles to it.

I have quoted these two high authorities, though they are decidedly in error, in order to warn young sailors not to be taken in, as I myself have been more than once, by too confident theoretical assertions, made obviously in perfectly good faith, and under a belief of their accordance with the facts; whereas the statements may merely have agreed with their author's theories, or, to speak more properly, with what they conceived these theories would lead to. Nothing can be further from my intention than to disparage the speculations of philosophers, who, without quitting their closets, so often extend the glorious lights of science to the remotest

corners of the globe, and by generalising the observed facts of mere practical men, add tenfold value to their researches.

In this spirit of mutual instruction, it is well worthy of remark, that, upon a careful consideration of the views of the writers above alluded to, the only circumstances inconsistent with the theory are those particular points in their theory which do not square with observation. This is exactly what we should expect of a sound hypothesis. An explanation that will fit equally well a true and a false statement of the facts, is evidently worth nothing: but if a theory, when placed side by side with the phenomena, is found to have only one or two objections to its universal application; and if it shall appear, upon further inquiry, that these objections vanish when more correct knowledge is obtained, the explanation is entitled, on the score of good faith, even to higher respect than if, in the first instance, it had been twisted so as to fit all the supposed circumstances.

It will contribute, I think, to facilitate a right apprehension of the various and

beautiful phenomena of the Trade-winds, to give, first, the theory of Hadley above alluded to, and then to describe the actual facts, as sailors find them when making a voyage. It may be useful to mention that this very theory was suggested to my own mind, by a long personal acquaintance with the subject, some years before I was aware that Hadley had written on it, and after I had found all the other theories which I had seen wholly inadequate to explain the phenomena.

If the earth had no motion on its axis, but were surrounded as at present with an atmosphere, and if the sun moved round and round it exactly above the equator without varying his declination, the following effects would ensue:—That portion of the earth lying, say thirty degrees, on each side of the equator, being more exposed to the action of the sun than those further from it, would become much warmer; while the superincumbent air, being greatly heated by the contact, would expand, or become specifically lighter, and would consequently rise. The adjacent air, both on the north and south, being cooler,

and, of course, heavier, would rush in to supply the place of the heated air. This air, coming from the regions beyond the tropics, would, in its turn, be heated on reaching the warmer equatorial regions, and rise, giving place to a fresh supply, which, it is easy to see, must be furnished by the descent of that portion of air formerly heated at the equator, raised into the cold regions of the sky, and forced into a regular circuit by fresh elevations of heated air. All these, and many other interesting results, are clearly developed in Daniell's Meteorological Essays, a book which every one at all interested in such inquiries will find it advantageous to study. The first edition of this work was published in 1823, some years after these speculations had been forced upon my notice by a long course of service between the tropics. In the Appendix to the second edition, 1827, Mr. Daniell did me the honour to publish a letter which I wrote to him on the Trade-winds, illustrative, as he thought, of his own doctrines.

It will be understood, that, as long as we imagine the globe at rest while this

circulation is going on, the course of the lower air along the surface would be directly towards the equator, from due north in one hemisphere, and from due south in the other ; while in the upper regions the currents would follow the opposite directions, and stream towards the poles. But the instant we conceive the earth put into rotatory motion from west to east, a change would take place in the course of these aërial currents, both above and below. It must be recollected, that a volume of air, when once put in motion, will move on, like any other body, by the mere force of its own momentum, till that motion is destroyed by its friction against the substances along or through which it is impelled. Any one who has observed the ring of smoke sometimes projected from the mouth of a cannon, will be sensible that this is true. The familiar experiment, also, of blowing out a candle by means of the air forced from the barrel of an uncharged fowling-piece, on firing at its touch-hole one of the copper priming-caps now in use, affords a popular illustration of the fact of a mass of air retain-

ing its motion for some time, when once acted upon.

It may also be of use, before going further, to consider, that if the globe, instead of being unequally heated, as we know that it is, were equally heated at all parts, from pole to pole, and being surrounded by an atmosphere, were then made to revolve on its axis, it would carry the atmosphere round with it, exactly at the rate at which it was itself going. That portion of the air in contact with the equator would move about 1000 miles in one hour, while that in latitude 90° would be as motionless as the poles themselves. If the parts of the earth's surface about the equator be supposed to move at the above rate, (which they do nearly), the following table will shew the rotatory velocity at which any other points on the surface move at the different parallels of latitude, these rates being to 1000 as the cosine of the latitude to radius.

LATITUDE.	Rotatory Velocity of a point on the earth's surface at the different parallels of latitude per hour, in miles.	Difference of the Rotatory Velocity of the earth's sur- face in miles, at the different parallels.
90° (North Pole.)	0	174
80° North.	174	168
70°	342	158
60°	500	143
50°	643	123
40°	766	100
30°	866	74
20°	940	45
10°	985	15
0° (The Equator.)	1000	15
10° South.	985	45
20°	940	74
30°	866	100
40°	766	123
50°	643	143
60°	500	158
70°	342	168
80°	174	174
90° (South Pole.)	0	

From this it will be seen, that while the equator moves at the rate of 1000 miles an hour, the district about the latitude 30° moves only 860, or 140 miles slower. The average whirling velocity of the earth's easterly motion, in the space between the equator and latitude 30° , may be stated at 950 miles an hour; and that of the belt lying between 30° and 40° , at about 800 miles.

In the hypothetical case, above suggested, of the whole surface being equally heated, and consequently the whole atmosphere at the same temperature, there would be a universal calm, whatever might be the rotatory motion impressed upon the earth. If, however, we next suppose, what really is the case, that the air over the tropical region is more heated than that which is farther from the equator, this rarefied air will instantly ascend, and occupy a place above the colder and more dense air, which will flow in from the belts lying beyond the tropics.

This position hardly needs any more obvious illustration than the above simple statement. But as I have met with per-

sons who, from not being much in the habit of considering such questions, did not immediately see the consequence of placing two fluids of different density side by side (such as portions of air differently heated), I may refer to a well-known experiment. If a long trough, divided in the middle by a sluice or partition, removable at pleasure, have one end filled with water, the other with quicksilver, both will remain quiet as long as they are divided. But when the sluice is drawn up, the lighter fluid will rise instantly and spread itself at the top, while the heavier will rush along the bottom of the trough under the lighter. If, instead of water and quicksilver, two portions of water, one boiling, the other cold, be placed in juxtaposition, similar results will be observed; because boiling water is lighter than that which is cold. Now, exactly the same thing takes place when unequally heated portions of air are brought together.

If we go from this simple experiment, on a small scale, to the phenomena of the great globe itself, we shall find the very

same laws in action, only modified by those particular circumstances which vary the scale and augment the varieties of the case, but take nothing from its consistency with the laws of statics. The cold air belonging to the belt just beyond and upon the tropics, which flows towards the equator, to occupy the place of the successive portions heated and raised into the upper regions over the equatorial belt, is acted upon by two forces, or, in other words, is influenced in its direction and rate by two distinct sources of motion. In the first place, there has been imparted to it a rotatory velocity of about 800 miles an hour to the east, by its contact with those parallels which revolve at that rate (see the Table, page 174); and, in the next place, its direction and rate will be modified by its tendency, already described, to flow towards the equator, which tendency is caused by the inequality in the density of the heated air between the tropics and the cold air beyond them. The combined effect of these two forces is to produce the Southeast Trade in south latitude, and the Northeast Trade on this side of the equator.

When the comparatively slow-moving air of the temperate zone, lying beyond the tropics, first comes in contact with those quicker-moving parts of the earth forming the tropical edges of the torrid zone, the apparent motion of the air from the east, caused by the relative difference of the rotatory velocity between the air and earth, is great, compared to the other motion of the air, caused by its being drawn directly towards the equator, to supply the place of the heated portions raised into the sky. Consequently, at the tropical borders of both Trades, the wind is found to blow very nearly from the east point.

I am tempted to borrow a few lines on this subject from Mrs. Somerville's recently published work on the Mechanism of the Heavens, of which the preliminary or popular part will delight the general reader no less than the profound speculations which follow must, doubtless, reward the patient study of the mathematician. The passage takes a broad view of the question, without adverting to those minute variations in the phenomena, which more properly fall within the province of actual observers.

“The heat of the sun,” says this accomplished writer, “occasions the Trade-winds, by rarefying the air at the equator, which causes the cooler and more dense part of the atmosphere to rush along the surface of the earth to the equator, while that which is heated is carried along the higher strata to the poles, forming two currents in the direction of the meridian. But the rotatory velocity of the air corresponding to its geographical situation decreases towards the poles: in approaching the equator, it must therefore revolve more slowly than the corresponding parts of the earth, and the bodies on the surface of the earth must strike against it with the excess of their velocity, and by its reaction they will meet with a resistance contrary to their motion of rotation; so that the wind will appear, to a person supposing himself to be at rest, to blow in a contrary direction to the earth’s rotation, or from east to west, which is the direction of the Trade-winds.” *

* Mechanism of the Heavens, by Mrs. Somerville. Preliminary Dissertation, page lvi.

Since the cool air of the temperate and comparatively slow-moving zones beyond the tropics is drawn towards the equator, and comes successively in contact with parallels of latitude moving faster and faster towards the east, there must be gradually imparted to it, by the increased friction, a considerable degree of the increased rotatory velocity belonging to the low latitudes it has now reached. That is to say, there will be less and less difference of velocity between the easterly motion of this temperate air and the easterly motion of the earth, and, consequently, the wind, as it approaches the equator, will appear to blow less and less directly from the eastward. But, while the earth's rotation within the tropics is thus acting on the slower-moving air which has travelled to it from beyond the tropics, with increased friction at every successive moment, there has been no such powerful counteracting influence in operation to diminish the meridional motion impressed on the air in question. For although in proceeding from the tropics towards the equator, the wind might at first sight be

supposed to have its speed somewhat lessened by friction along the earth's surface, the retardation due to this cause, if there be any at all, must be inconsiderable, compared to that which affects the motion caused by the difference in the rotatory velocity of the earth at the different parallels. It must be recollected, also, that there is a constant demand for fresh air from the north and south, to occupy the place of the heated and rarefied air which is raised up in the torrid zone; and this demand being pretty equal, the motion it produces on the air in the direction of the meridian must likewise be uniform.

If it be admitted that all the easterly character of the Trade-winds is due to the difference of velocity between the rotation of the torrid zone of the earth from west to east, and that of the air impressed only with the slower rotatory motion to the east of the temperate zone (and this, I conceive, is obvious), it will follow, that if this difference of velocities (between the earth and the air in contact with it) be diminished or annihilated, the easterly character of these winds will be

diminished or annihilated likewise. At the same time, there is no cause in operation, that I can discover, to alter the direction of the meridional motion, as it may be called, of the Trade-winds, or that by which they are impelled directly towards the equator.

At first starting from the temperate zone, on its voyage to the equator, the cold air of that slow-moving region, is impressed with a rotatory velocity of only 800 miles per hour to the eastward, but it soon comes over parts of the earth moving more than 100 miles per hour faster to the eastward than itself. By the table (page 174) it will be observed, that the difference of velocity in the earth's rotation between latitudes 30° and 20° is 74 miles an hour, while between 20° and 10° it is only 45 miles, and in the next ten degrees the difference in rate per hour is reduced to 15 miles.

The velocity with which the air drawn from beyond the tropics travels along the sea towards the equator, is probably not above twenty miles an hour, a rate slow enough to allow time for the constantly

increasing friction of the earth's rotation to act upon it, and draw it more and more entirely to the east. By the time it has reached the equatorial regions, the friction of the earth's surface has operated long enough to carry the air completely along with it; and, of course, all relative motion being done away with, every thing easterly in the character of the Trade-winds will be at an end.

But although this constantly increasing friction of the earth's rotation has thus annihilated all relative easterly motion between the air and earth, that air still retains its motion towards the equator; and accordingly we do find the Trade-winds, at their equatorial limits, blowing, not from the east, as Hadley, Dr. Young, and others, conceived, but directly from the north and from the south respectively. The strength and velocity of the Trades at these places is, in general, considerably diminished, chiefly, perhaps, by the air becoming heated, and rising up rather than flowing along; and also, no doubt, by the meeting of the two opposite currents of air—one from the north, the other

from the south—which produces the intermediate space called the Calms, or the Variables.

In strict conformity with these theoretical views, the clouds above the Trades are almost invariably observed to proceed in the contrary direction to the winds below. On the top of the Peak of Teneriffe I found a gentle breeze blowing from the south-westward, directly opposite to the course of the Trade-wind.

The more detailed circumstances usually met with in that part of a voyage to India which lies between 30° north and 30° south, and which I am about to describe, will now, I imagine, be readily understood. Before setting out, however, I must take the liberty of strongly recommending to any young or old person who may wish to see these matters clearly, and to have them fixed in his mind to useful purpose, to follow both the theoretical and the practical parts of this explanation with the assistance of a terrestrial globe.

Most ships touch at Madeira, either to take in a stock of wine, to get fruit and vegetables, or merely to form a pleasant

enough break in the early and most disagreeable part of the voyage. Some ships pass barely in sight of the high mountain which rises above the town of Funchal, and satisfy themselves with taking sights for verifying the rates of their chronometers when on the meridian of the island; while others tantalise their passengers still more by sweeping through the roads, but without anchoring, or even communicating with the shore. I need not observe, that the captains of such ships are pretty deeply, if not very loudly, abused by all hands, passengers especially, who, it may be remarked, are perhaps the most dissatisfied, growling, and troublesome, of all God's locomotive creatures. The cause is obvious enough; they have nothing to do, and, as Jack pithily and pertinently says, "the instant the devil catches a man idle, he sets him to work." Accordingly, though it be the custom to pity passengers, and although, assuredly, they well deserve pity, there is another class who deserve compassion far more, I mean their wretched victim the captain, whom it is their chief study, and almost single

enjoyment, to torment. But as this topic of passengers and captains requires a long chapter by itself, I shall proceed at present on our voyage across the line.

Shortly after leaving Madeira, which is in $32\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ north latitude, a ship may expect to meet the Trades; but she cannot calculate with any certainty upon catching them till she reaches the parallel of 28° . On first reaching the Trade-wind, it will be found to blow very nearly from due east, and with this a course is easily steered past or amongst the Canaries, and thence for the Cape de Verdes. Some navigators pass within this group, others keep so far out as barely to make San Antonio; and this, I think, is considered the best route. As the ship proceeds to the southward, the wind draws gradually round from the east to north-east, and eventually to north-north-east, and even to north, at the southern margin of the north-east Trade-wind.

The position of this margin or southern edge, which in technical language is called the equatorial limit of the Trade, varies considerably with the season of the year.

From December to May inclusive, it frequently reaches as far as the 3d degree of north latitude, though it ranges about 5° and 6° north. From June to November, it is shifted back as far, sometimes, as 13° north, but it seldom extends as far south as 8° north.

I have given on the following page a very curious and instructive Table, shewing the equatorial limits of both Trade-winds, deduced by Capt. James Horsburgh, hydrographer of the East India Company, from the observations of 238 ships. This table shews very clearly the effect of the absence or presence of the sun in shifting the limits of the Trades, drawing them after him, as it were. The presence of the sun in either hemisphere obstructs considerably the regularity and strength of the Trade-winds in that hemisphere, and vice versâ.

Table shewing the Equatorial Limits of the Trade Winds between the 18th and 26th degree of West Longitude, determined from the Log-books of 238 Ships.

Months.	Latitude in which the Ships				Latitude in which the Ships				Mean Out and Home.	Diff. of the 2 Mean Limits of N.E. and S.E. Trades.
	Lost N.E. Trade Outward bound.		Got N.E. Trade Homeward bound.		Lost S.E. Trade Homeward bound.		Got S.E. Trade Outward bound.			
	North.	Mean N.	North.	Mean N.	° to 4° N.	Mean N.	North.	Mean N.		
	5° to 10°	7°	3° to 6°	4½°	1° to 4° N.	2½°	2° to 4°	3°		
January ..	5 ... 10	7	2 ... 7	5	1° to 4° N.	2½°	1° to 4° N.	2½°	N. 2¾°	3°
February.	2½ ... 8	5½	2 ... 7	5	2 S. to 3	1½	1° to 4° N.	2½°	1° to 4° N.	4¾
March.....	4 ... 9	6	4 ... 8	5½	1 ... 2	1	2 S. to 3	1½	1° to 4° N.	3¾
April.....	5 ... 10	7	4½ ... 7	6	2 ... 2½	1	2 S. to 3	1½	1° to 4° N.	4½
May.....	7 ... 13	9	7 ... 12	9	1 N. to 4	2½	1 N. to 4	2½	1° to 4° N.	3¾
June.....	8½ ... 15	12	11 ... 14	12	1 ... 5	3	1 ... 5	3	1° to 4° N.	6
July.....	11 ... 15	13	11 ... 14½	13	1 ... 6	4	1 ... 6	4	1° to 4° N.	8½
August...	9 ... 14	11½	11 ... 14	12	3 ... 5	4	3 ... 5	4	1° to 4° N.	9¾
September	7½ ... 13	10	8½ ... 14	10	2 ... 4	3½	2 ... 4	3½	1° to 4° N.	8¾
October...	6 ... 11	9	7 ... 0	7	3 ... 4	3	3 ... 4	3	1° to 4° N.	7
November	5 ... 7	6	3 ... 6	5	1 ... 4	2½	1 ... 4	2½	1° to 4° N.	4¾
December										2¾

N.B. The mean numbers incline a little from the true mean towards the extreme limit experienced by the majority of the ships.

The great difficulty experienced in making the outward-bound voyage commences after the ship has been deserted by the north-east Trade, for she has then to fight her way to the southward across the region of Calms and Variables. But as these Variables blow generally from the southward and westward, from a cause afterwards to be explained, it is obvious enough why this part of the homeward voyage is always more easily made than the outward passage. These southerly breezes, which are met with in the Variables, blow at times with considerable force, and greatly perplex the young navigator, who, trusting perhaps to some of the erroneous published accounts, not unnaturally reckons upon meeting the regular Trade-wind blowing, as he supposes, from the east near the equator, not from the south; still less is he prepared or pleased to find it blowing from the south-westward.

This troublesome range, intervening between the two Trades, varies in width from 150 to more than 500 miles. It is widest in September, and narrowest in December or January. I now speak more

particularly of what happens in the Atlantic. In the wide Pacific, far from land, fewer modifying circumstances interfere with the regular course of the phenomena, than in the comparatively narrow sea formed by the opposite shoulders of Africa and South America.

Calms, also, are met with in this intermediate region, or purgatory of the outward-bound voyage, and occasionally violent tornados or squalls, which, in a moment, tear away every rag of canvass from a ship's yards. For several hours at a time, also, rain falls down in absolute torrents. Even when the weather clears up, and a fresh breeze comes, it is generally from the southward, directly in the outward-bound navigator's teeth. He must have patience, however, and strive to make the most of it by keeping on that tack by which most southing is to be gained. It is now, I believe, generally held to be the best practice to place the ship between 18° and 23° of west longitude on losing the north-east Trade; and likewise to endeavour, if possible, to cross the equator somewhere between

these two longitudes. Before reaching the line, however, the navigator will almost always be met by the south-east Trade-wind. From January to May he may expect to meet it in 1° or 2° north latitude; but in summer and autumn, he will find the northern or equatorial limit of the south-east Trade a degree or two still further to the northward of the lines. See the Table, at page 188.

On first encountering the south-east Trade, an outward-bound ship is obliged to steer much more to the westward than she wishes to do, in consequence of the wind blowing so directly towards the equator, and not along it, as some of the books will insist on, in spite of nature. So that, if she be a dull sailer, she may have some difficulty in weathering the coast of Brazil about Cape St. Roque. As she proceeds onwards, however, and makes a little more southing, the wind will haul more and more round from the south to the south-east, then east-south-east, and eventually to east at the southern limit of the Trade-wind. An inexperienced sailor, on first entering the south-east Trade, is very

apt to be too solicitous about making southing, and hugs the wind much too close ; whereas, he ought rather to keep his ship off a little, give her a fathom or two of the fore and main sheets, and take a small pull of the weather top-sail and top-gallant braces, to ensure making good way through the water. Indeed, many officers go so far as to recommend flanking across the south-east Trade with a foretopmast studding-sail set. Although, I think, there can be no doubt of the soundness of this advice, I confess that it does require no inconsiderable degree of faith to adopt a course, which, apparently, takes the ship not directly away from her object, but very much out of the straight road. In this respect, it may be remarked, that the scale of navigation on every Indian voyage is so great, and the importance of getting into those parallels where favourable breezes are certain to be met with, of so much more consequence than the gain of mere distance, that two or three hundred miles to the right or left, or even twice that space, is often not to be regarded. Accordingly, in cutting or flanking across

the south-east Trade-wind, the object, it should be remembered, is not to shorten the distance, but to reach those latitudes where strong westerly gales are to be met with, by help of which five hundred or a thousand miles of lost distance are speedily made up, and the rest of the passage secured.

In those regions lying beyond the southern tropic, westerly winds prevail during the greater part of the year, exactly as we find on this side of the northern tropic. In the southern hemisphere, and far from the land, the wind may be said to blow from the westward almost as steadily as the Trades do from the eastward. The great object, therefore, for an outward-bound ship is to get far enough south to ensure this fair wind. Beyond the latitude of 30° , and as far as 40° , this purpose will generally be answered.

We are sufficiently familiar in England with the fact of westerly winds prevailing in the Atlantic; but it may be interesting to state a nautical fact, established by ample experience, shewing the degree in which this circumstance operates practi-

cally. From a list of the passages made by the New York monthly packets across the Atlantic, during a period of six years, it is shewn that the average length of the voyage from Liverpool to America, that is, towards the west, is forty days; while the average length of the homeward passage, or that from west to east, is only twenty-three days. And it may fix these facts more strongly on the recollection, to mention, that the passage-money from England to America (against the prevalent wind) is five guineas more than that paid on the return voyage;—the outward voyage costing thirty-five, the homeward thirty guineas.

This prevalence of westerly winds beyond the tropics is readily explained by the same reasoning which has been applied to the Trades blowing within them. The swift-moving air of the torrid zone, on being rarefied and raised up, flows along towards the poles, and in a direction from the equator, above the cooler and slower-moving air, which, as I have already described, is drawn along the surface of the earth from the temperate

regions beyond the tropics. When the rarefied equatorial air has travelled some thirty or forty degrees of latitude along the upper regions of the atmosphere towards the poles, it becomes cooled, and is ready to descend again, between the latitudes of 30° and 60° , to supply the place of the lower air, drawn off towards the equator by the Trade-winds. But this partially cooled air falls on a part of the earth's surface which is moving much more slowly towards the east, in its diurnal rotation, than the air which has descended upon it, and which is still impressed with a great proportion of its eastern velocity due to the equatorial parallels of latitude, where it was heated and raised up. The necessary consequence of this is to produce a rapid motion in the air from the west over the earth's surface; and this, combined with the other motion of the same portion of air, or that which has driven it from the equatorial regions, produces so remarkable a prevalence of south-westerly winds in the northern hemisphere, and north-westerly winds in the southern hemisphere, in those

districts lying between the latitudes of 30° and 60° .

In all that has been said above, it has been assumed that the quickest-moving or equatorial belt of the earth is also the hottest, and consequently that over which the air has the greatest tendency to rise. But, although this is generally true, it is not, by any means, universally so. The variations, however, which are observed to occur in those places where the circumstances form an exception to the general rule, tend strongly to confirm the theory of Hadley. The monsoons of India, as I shall presently shew, are examples of this; but the most striking instance with which I am personally acquainted occurs in the Pacific ocean, between the Bay of Panama and the Peninsula of California, from latitude 8° to 22° north. If the huge continent of Mexico were taken away, and only sea left in its place, there can be no doubt but the ordinary phenomena of the Trade-winds would be observable in that part of the Pacific above mentioned. Cool air would then be drawn, from the slow-moving parallels lying to the northward,

towards the swift-moving latitudes, near the equator, in order to supply the place of the rarefied air removed to the higher regions of the atmosphere, and, of course, north-easterly breezes would be produced. But when the sun comes over Mexico, that vast district of country is made to act the part of an enormous heater, and becomes a far more powerful cause of rarefaction to the superincumbent air than the ocean which lies between it and the equator. Accordingly, the air over Mexico, between the latitudes of 10° and 30° , is more heated than that which lies over the sea between the line and latitude 20° ; and as the coolest, or least heated, that is, the most dense fluid, always rushes towards the place lately occupied by the hottest and most buoyant, the air from the equator will be drawn towards the coast of Mexico, the great local source of heat and rarefaction.

But as this equatorial air is of course impressed with a more rapid eastern velocity than those parts of the earth which form the southern shores of Mexico, a westerly wind must be produced by the

relative difference in these two motions. At that particular season of the year when the sun is in high southern declination, Mexico is not exposed to his perpendicular rays. The equatorial regions are then more heated than Mexico, and accordingly we actually find north-easterly breezes, nearly as they would be if Mexico were out of the way, and quite in accordance with our theory.

In like manner, in the Atlantic, when the sun is far to the north, the great deserts of the western angle, or shoulder of Africa, become as vehemently heated, or more so, perhaps, than Mexico, and this draws the air from the equator, so as to produce the south-westerly winds I have already spoken of in the troublesome range called the Variables.

Finally, the great Monsoons of the Indian ocean and China sea contribute to establish this theory of Hadley, though I am not aware that he ever brought it to bear on these very interesting phenomena. They are eminently deserving of such notice, however, from being periodical Trade-winds of the highest order of utility

in one of the busiest commercial regions of the world. Their periodical or shifting character, to which they owe the name of Monsoon, from an oriental word signifying season, is the circumstance upon which their extensive utility in a great measure depends, amongst nations where the complicated science of navigation is but in a rude state. Myriads of vessels sail from their homes during one Monsoon before the wind, or so nearly before it, that there is no great skill required in reaching all the ports at which they wish to touch; and when the wind shifts to the opposite quarter, they steer back again, in like manner, with a flowing sheet. Thus, with an exceedingly small portion of nautical skill, they contrive to make their passages by means of what we blue jackets call a 'soldier's wind—there and back again.' It will sometimes happen that these rude navigators miscalculate their time, or meet with accidents to retard them, till the period of change has gone past, and then they have no resource but to wait for half a year till the Monsoon shifts, not quite so unpleasantly; to be

sure, as Parry, when jammed up in the ice, but scarcely less fixed.

Experienced sailors in like circumstances, acquainted with the varieties of winds prevailing in those seas, and having some acquaintance with this theory, if not in their heads, at least at their finger ends, would speedily get their vessels out of the scrape above described, into which the lubberly Chinese junks sometimes fall. They might, and certainly would, lose time in making a round-about of some two or three hundred miles in searching for a wind; but if they really knew what they were about, they would be sure to catch it at last, and to turn it to their purpose.

I must repeat, that any one not personally familiar with the lands and seas of the East will hardly be able to follow with satisfaction or advantage the sketch of the Monsoons which I am about to give, unless he have a globe under his fingers to refer to at every sentence. I dare not hope, otherwise, to make myself intelligible in this, or, indeed, in any other part of a chapter so completely professional.

From April to October, when the sun's

rays fall with greatest effect on Arabia, India, and China, and the several interjacent seas to which these immense countries give their name, the air in contact with them becoming heated, rises, and gives place to fresh supplies drawn from the equator. But this equatorial mass of air has had imparted to it, by the earth's rotation, a greater degree of velocity in the direction from west to east than belongs to the countries and seas just mentioned; and this additional velocity, combined with its motion from the equator, in rushing to fill up the vacuum caused by the rarefaction of the air over those regions intersected by the tropic, causes the southwest Monsoon. "This wind," says Horsburgh, "prevails from April to October, between the equator and the tropic of Cancer, and it reaches from the east coast of Africa to the coasts of India, China, and the Philippine Islands; its influence extends sometimes into the Pacific ocean as far as the Marian Islands, on to longitude about 145° east, and it reaches as far north as the Japan Islands."*

* Horsburgh's Directions, Introduction, page 4.

Captain Horsburgh, the most accomplished and intelligent, and, I may add one of the most useful, of Oriental navigators, thus goes on to describe what takes place in the winter months:

“The north-east Monsoon,” he says, “prevails from October to May, throughout nearly the same space that the south-west Monsoon prevails in the opposite season mentioned above. But the Monsoons are subject to great obstructions by land; and in contracted places, such as Malacca Strait, they are changed into variable winds. Their limits are not every where the same, nor do they always shift exactly at the same period.”*

During this last-named period, when the north-east Monsoon is blowing, viz. from October to May, the sun is acting with its greatest energy on the regions about the equator and the seas lying between it and the southern tropic, while the countries formerly mentioned (Arabia, India, and China), lying under the northern tropic, become comparatively cool. The air over these regions becomes relatively more dense

* Horsburgh's Directions, Introduction, page 4.

than the rarefied air near the line ; consequently the cool air rushes to the southward to interchange places with that which has been heated ; and as the cool air comes from slower-moving to quicker-moving parallels of latitude, that is, from the tropical to the equatorial regions, the north-easterly Monsoon is produced, very much resembling in its effect, as it strictly does in its cause, the ordinary Trade-wind of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

This is a very general view of what may be called the great Monsoons of India ; but there are many variations in different places, all of which are so readily explained by the foregoing theory, that they form by no means the least interesting branch of the subject, or the least satisfactory of its illustrations.

One of the most extensive of these varieties, though of a less general and sweeping character than those which blow in the Arabian sea and bay of Bengal, is found in a very remote part of the world. “ From October to April this north-west Monsoon prevails between the north-east part of Madagascar and the west coast of New

Holland ; and it is generally confined between the equator and 10° or 11° south latitude, but subject to irregularities.”* This westerly wind is evidently produced by the air drawn actually from the equator towards the slower-moving latitudes of the earth, by the rarefaction of the air to the southward when the sun is near the tropic of Capricorn. “The south-east Monsoon predominates from April to October in the space last mentioned, and in some places reaches to the equator.”† In this case, the slow-moving air near the southern tropic is brought, as in the ordinary case of the south-east Trade-wind, to the quick-moving parts of the earth’s surface.

The following remark of Horsburgh’s, in describing the Monsoons, is extremely valuable, and assists in the neatest manner possible to explain Hadley’s theory of these matters : —

“The parts where the north-west and the south-east Monsoons prevail with greatest strength and regularity, are in

* Horsburgh, Introduction, page 4. † Ibid.

the Java sea, and from thence eastward to Timor, amongst the Molucca and Banda Islands, and onward to New Guinea ;” * for it will be obvious to any one who inspects the globe on reading this passage, that there occurs in the neighbourhood of the spots alluded to, a powerful cause for the strength and regularity of the Monsoons. The enormous island, or continent, as it might almost be called, of New Holland, may well be supposed to act the part of a heater from October to April, when the sun is so nearly over it. During that period the equatorial air is drawn to the south along the intermediate seas, amongst the Moluccas and other Spice Islands, so as to produce a strong and steady north-westerly Monsoon. Of course, the opposite effect will be produced when the sun retreats to the north, and leaves New Holland to cool.

These instances are quite enough, I should imagine, to satisfy ordinary curiosity on this point ; but professional men will not, or ought not, to be con-

* Horsburgh, Introduction, page 4.

tented till they have investigated all branches of this important topic — including, of course, that elegant and very useful episode, the land and sea breezes of all hot climates. Horsburgh's East India Directory, which I have quoted above so frequently, is by far the best authority with which I am acquainted on these subjects. Indeed I may say, without any fear of contradiction, that this extraordinary work is one of the most valuable gifts which well-directed industry has bestowed on modern navigation. Under its sole guidance I have sailed, I dare say, over more than a hundred thousand miles of the earth's surface, not in broad daylight only, and in favourable weather, but often in the dark, and in storms, and frequently, too, when not one person on board had ever visited those regions before. In proportion as my own local knowledge of those seas became matured, by the experience of several years while navigating amongst them, so the confidence I felt in the authority of this admirable navigator became more and more confirmed.

I must not, however, omit to do justice to a beautifully written and accurate Essay on Winds and Currents, by that Prince of all Voyagers, Old Dampier—who, with means far more circumscribed than most of his successors, has contrived to arrange and condense his information in such a way as not only to render it available to practical men, but to make it intelligible and interesting to every class of readers.

CHAPTER VIII.

PROGRESS OF THE VOYAGE.

LET people say what they please of the fine bracing weather of a cold climate, I never saw any truth-speaking persons who, on coming fairly to the trial, did not complain of a cold frosty morning as a very great nuisance, or who did not cling eagerly to the fire to unbrace themselves again. For my own part, I have always delighted in the relaxation, if such be the word, or the lassitude caused by hot weather, and, accordingly, have very rarely in my life encountered too hot a day. Of course, in saying this, I take it for granted that the weather is to have fair play, and that our dress, apartments, and all other circumstances, shall be suitable. Many a day far too hot have I met with in the choky, oven-like streets of London, where the blacks and the dust and the multitudes of people combine to

augment the temperature, already raised to the true German-stove pitch by the reflection of such of the sun's rays as succeed in forcing their way through the stratum of smoke to the half-black, half-red bricks of the walls. In winter evenings, too, when every crevice or opening for the air in a well-packed ball-room is carefully kept shut, by orders from those perverse dowagers who choose to plant themselves near the windows, a lively representation of the climate of the black-hole at Calcutta is sure to be enacted. At such seasons it certainly is rather too hot. Occasionally, also, at night, on board ship, in warm climates, in harbour, or in a calm at sea, when all hands are below, the climate may well be called insufferable. Or in such horrible sinks and swamps as Batavia and New Orleans, where the motionless air becomes thick and clammy with miasmata, there is no denying that the heat is too great.

But I have very seldom, if ever, felt the weather disagreeably warm, even in India, when sailing on the open sea, or enjoying the free range of a wide country, under

awnings and bungaloes, or stretched in a palanquin, or shaded by an umbrella on the back of an elephant. Soldiers and sailors, whose duty exposes them at all hours, either on a march or in boats, must, in spite of every contrivance of this sort, be often struck down by the heat, and sigh with all their hearts for the bracing frosts of higher latitudes. I grant, therefore, that what is said above has reference exclusively to those happy folks who can command their own time and occupations, and who have the means of bringing to bear on their comforts those innumerable luxurious contrivances which the ingenuity of wealth has devised in the East, to render its climate not only bearable, but one of the most enjoyable in the world.

As we sailed along on our voyage to India, gradually slipping down from the high to the low latitudes, the merry sun crept up higher and higher every day towards the zenith, while the thermometer, of course, rose likewise. What was most agreeable in this change from cold to warmth, was the little difference between the temperature of the day and that of

the night. As we approached the equator, the thermometer fell only from 82° in the day-time to 79° or 80° at night, which, on deck, was delightful. We did not, of course, come to this high temperature all at once; for on the 6th of May, the day after we passed directly under the sun, the average of the twenty-four hours was 73° , and at night 69° and 70° .

It is not to be imagined that every one was pleased with these changes; for, on board ship, as on shore, there exist, at all times, and in all latitudes, weathers, and climates, a set of discontented spirits, whose acquired habit or whose radical nature it is to find fault with the existing state of things, be these what they may. To such cantankerous folks a growl of misery would really seem to be the great paradoxical happiness of their lives, and the more unreasonable the cause, provided there seem reason in it, the better for their purpose. It is frequently not any actual inconvenience of which these grumblers complain, but chiefly that which they might, could, or would suffer were certain things to happen, all of which, of course,

it is part of your thorough-bred growler to prophesy will happen. I have seen a middy of this stamp glad to find, on coming below, that some insignificant portion of his dinner really had been devoured by his hungry messmates, while he himself was keeping his watch on deck.

“ I am used worse than a dog,” he would cry, secretly delighted to have gained the luxury of a grievance upon which he might ring the changes of his ill usage for the next week. “ I can’t even get a basin of pease soup put by for me ; it’s such an infernal shame, I’ll cut the service !”

The diversity of climate on an Indian voyage furnishes capital nuts for these perturbed spirits. It is first too cold, then too hot, then there is not wind enough, then it blows too fresh in the squalls ; by and by the nights are discovered to be abominably close and sultry, and in the day the fierce flaming downright heat of the sun is still worse ; then the calms are never to be over ; or the lying Trades, as they call them, have got capsised, and blow from the west instead of the east !

After the line has been crossed, and the south-east wind is met with, the weather soon becomes what these ingenious fellows call too temperate, then it grows too cold again ; and next, off the Cape, the latitude is too stormy.—In this alone they have some reason ; and I have often regretted that, by a royal ordinance of the King of Portugal, the name of this mighty promontory was changed from Cabo de Tormentos, the headland of storms, to its present spoony title. In short, this grand voyage is merely a peristrephic panorama of miseries, which if they survive, say they, it will be happy for them. Happy ! Not a whit. It is out of their nature to be happy. To find fault, and to fling away the good the gods provide them, to sour every cup of enjoyment by the gall of discontent expressed from their own hearts, and to aggravate the pain of every real wound by the impatience of idle complaints, is their diseased joy. ‘ Evil, be thou my good ! ’ they might well exclaim ; for, instead of heightening the pleasures of life by full participation, or subduing its inevitable evils, or, at all events, softening

their asperity by enduring with fortitude and cheerfulness what cannot be helped, these self-tormentors reject what is substantially pleasing, and cling with habitual, but morbid relish, to whatever is disagreeable.

As we glided along, through the Trade-winds, towards the neck of sea which divides Africa from America, the symptoms of a change in climate became daily more manifest. Every skylight and stern window was fastened wide open, and every cabin-scuttle driven out, that a free draught of air might sweep through the ship all night long. In the day-time, the pitch in the seams of the upper-deck soon began to melt, and, by sticking to the soles of our shoes, plastered the planks, to the great discomfiture of the captain of the after-guard. The tar, oosing from the cordage aloft, dropped on our heads, speckled the snow-white boat covers, and obliged us to spread the hammock cloths, to prevent the bedding being ruined by the spots. On the larboard or eastern side of the ship, which, of course, is always presented to the sun when crossing the Trades on the outward-

bound voyage, the pitch and rosin with which the seams had been payed ran down in little streams across the lines of paint. To prevent, as far as we could, some of these annoyances, we spread the awnings over the decks, and triced up the curtains, fore and aft, while every art was used to introduce air to all parts of the ship. The half-ports were removed from the main-deck guns, the gratings put on one side, and as many windsails sent down the hatchways as could be made to catch a puff of air. Blue trousers and beaver scrapers soon gave way before the elements, and were succeeded by nan-keens, straw hats, and canvass caps. In the captain's cabin, where the presence of the governor, our passenger, still kept up the straight-laced etiquettes of the service, coats and epaulettes appeared at dinner; but in the gun-room, the officers, the instant they came below, slipped on their light white jackets, and, sans waistcoat, seized their flutes and books, and drew their chairs as near as possible to the mouth of the windsail. In the midshipmen's birth, outside in the steerage, truth

compels me to acknowledge, that the shirt without neckcloth or stock, and sometimes with its sleeves rolled up to the elbows, was the most fashionable rig. The seamen and marines, of course, dined on the main-deck, not only that they might enjoy the fresh air breathing gently in upon them through the ports on the weather side, and sweeping out again by those to leeward, but that the lower-deck might be kept as cool and airy as possible against the sultry feverish night season.

On such occasions the men leave their tables and stools below, and either seat themselves tailor-fashion, or recline Roman-fashion. Nor is this in the least degree unpleasant; for the deck of a man-of-war is made as clean every morning as any table, and is kept so during the day by being swept at least once an hour. Of all the tunes played by the boatswain's pipe, that which calls the sweepers is the most frequently heard. When the order is given for dining on deck, the different messes into which the crew are divided occupy the spots immediately above their usual mess-places below, as far as the guns

allow of their doing so. It has always struck me as very pleasing, to see the main-deck covered, from the after-hatchway to the cook's coppers, with the people's messes, enjoying their noonday repast, as delicious to them, and probably far more so, than any turtle feast to any alderman; while the celestial grog, with which their hard, dry, salt junk is washed down, out-matches, twentyfold, in Jack's estimation, all the thin potations, the clarets, and hocks, and vin de Graves, of those who, in no very courteous language, are called their betters. For I will venture to say, that at such well-fed moments, no mortals, of whatever rank in the world, take precedence, on the score of enjoyment and contentment, of these our light-hearted tars and jolly marines.

Until we had crossed the north-east Trade, and reached the Calms, the ship's way through the water was too great to allow of bathing alongside; but we easily contrived a shower-bath, which answered very well. This consisted of a packing-box, the bottom of which was perforated with holes, triced up between two of the

skids, near the gangway, and under the quarter of one of the boats on the booms. A couple of the top-men with draw-buckets supplied the water from above, while the bather stood on the main-deck enjoying the shower. The time selected for this delicious bath was generally about four o'clock in the morning, after the middle watch was out, and before the exhausted officer tumbled into bed. A four hours' walk, indeed, in a sultry night, be it managed ever so gently, has a tendency to produce a degree of heat approaching to feverishness; and I have no words to describe the luxury of standing under a cool shower when the long task is ended. We were generally just enough fatigued to be sure of a sound, light, happy sleep, and just enough heated to revel in the coolest water that was to be had. In fact, we found that of the sea much too warm, being only two or three degrees below the temperature of the air. To remedy this, we generally exposed a dozen buckets-full on the gangway at eight or nine o'clock in the evening; and these, being allowed to stand till morning, became so much cooler

by the evaporation in the night, that the shock was unspeakably grateful.

Perhaps there is not any more characteristic evidence of our being within the tropical regions, one, I mean, which strikes the imagination more forcibly, than the company of those picturesque little animals, if it be correct so to call them, the flying-fish. It is true, that a stray one or two may sometimes be seen far north, making a few short skips out of the water, and I even remember seeing several close to the edge of the banks of Newfoundland, in latitude 45° . These, however, had been swept out of their natural position by the huge gulf-stream, an ocean in itself, which retains much of its temperature far into the northern regions, and possibly helps to modify the climate over the Atlantic. But it is not until the voyager has fairly reached the heart of the torrid zone that he sees the flying-fish in perfection.

No familiarity with the sight can ever render us indifferent to the graceful flight of these most interesting of all the finny, or, rather, winged tribe. On the contrary, like a bright day, or a smiling

countenance, or good company of any kind, the more we see of them, the more we learn to value their presence. I have, indeed, hardly ever observed a person so dull, or unimaginative, that his eye did not glisten as he watched a shoal, or, it may well be called, a covey of flying-fish rise from the sea, and skim along for several hundred yards. There is something in it so very peculiar, so totally dissimilar to every thing else in other parts of the world, that our wonder goes on increasing every time we see even a single one take its flight. The incredulity, indeed, of the old Scotch wife on this head is sufficiently excusable. “ You may hae seen rivers o’ milk, and mountains o’ sugar,” said she to her son, returned from a voyage ; “ but you’ll ne’er gar me believe you hae seen a fish that could flee ! ”

I have endeavoured to form an estimate as to the length of these flights, and find two hundred yards set down in my notes as about the longest ; but, I think, subsequent observation has extended the space. The amiable Humboldt good-naturedly suggests, that these flights may

be mere gambols, and not indicative of the flying-fish being pursued by their formidable enemy the dolphin. I wish I could believe so ; for it were much more agreeable to suppose, that at the end of the fine sweep which they take, at the height of ten or twenty feet above the surface, they may fall gently and safely on the bosom of the sea, than pop full into the voracious jaws of their merciless foe.

I do not recollect whether the eminent traveller just mentioned, who not only observes many more things than most men, but describes them much better, has any where mentioned his having witnessed one of these chases. Indeed, they are not very often seen ; at least, I am not sure that I have observed above half a dozen, though I have crossed and recrossed the equator fourteen times. The prettiest I remember to have assisted at, as the French say, and the details of which I shall describe presently, was during the first voyage I ever made through those regions of the sun. The pleasant Trade which had wafted us, with different degrees of velocity, over a distance of more than a thousand

miles, at last gradually failed. The first symptom of the approaching calm was the sails beginning to flap gently against the masts, so gently, indeed, that we half hoped it was caused, not so much by the diminished force of the breeze, with which we were very unwilling to part, as by that long and peculiar swell which,

“ In the torrid clime
Dark heaving,”

has found the hand of a master-artist to embody it in a description, more technically correct, and certainly far more graphic in all its parts, than if the picture had been filled up from the log-books of ten thousand voyagers.

The same noble writer, by merely letting his imagination run wild a little, has also given a sketch of what might take place were one of these calms to be perpetual; and so true to nature is all his pencilling, that many a time, when day after day has passed without a breath of wind, and there came no prospect of any breeze, I have recollected the following strange

lines, and almost fancied that such might be our own dismal fate.

“ The rivers, lakes, and ocean, all stood still,
And nothing stirred within their silent depths;
Ships sailorless lay rotting on the sea,
And their masts fell down piecemeal; as they
dropped,
They slept on the abyss without a surge.
The waves were dead; the tides were in their
grave,
The moon, their mistress, had expired before;
The winds were withered in the stagnant air,
And the clouds perished.”——*

The faint zephyrs, which had coquetted with our languid sails for an hour or two, at length took their leave, first of the courses, then of the top sails, and lastly of the royals and the smaller flying kites aloft. In vain we looked round and round the horizon for some traces of a return of our old friend the Trade, but could distinguish nothing save one polished, dark-heaving sheet of glass, reflecting the unbroken disk of the sun, and the bright, clear sky in the moving mirror beneath. From the heat, which soon became intense,

* Darkness. By Lord Byron.

there was no escape, either on deck or below, aloft in the tops, or still higher on the cross-trees ; neither could we find relief down in the hold ; for it was all the same, except that in the exposed situations we were scorched or roasted, in the others suffocated. The useless helm was lashed amidships, the yards were lowered on the cap, and the boats were dropped into the water to fill up the cracks and rents caused by the fierce heat. The occasion was taken advantage of to shift some of the sails, and to mend others ; most of the running ropes also were turned end for end. A listless feeling stole over us all, and we lay about the decks gasping for breath, in vain seeking for some alleviation to our thirst by drink ! drink ! drink ! Alas, the transient indulgence only made the matter worse.

Meanwhile, our convoy of huge China ships, rolling very slowly on the top of the long, smooth, and scarcely perceptible ridges, or sinking as gently between their summits, were scattered in all directions, with their heads in different ways, some looking homeward again, and some, as if

by instinct, keeping still for the south. How it happens I do not know, but on occasions of perfect calm, or such as appear to be perfectly calm, the ships of a fleet generally drift away from one another; so that, at the end of a few hours, the whole circle bounded by the horizon is speckled over with these unmanageable hulks, as they may for the time be considered. It will occasionally happen, indeed, that two ships draw so near in a calm as to incur some risk of falling on board one another. I need scarcely mention, that, even in the smoothest water ever found in the open sea, two large ships coming into actual contact must prove a formidable encounter. As long as they are apart, their gentle and rather graceful movements are fit subjects of admiration; and I have often seen people gazing, for an hour at a time, at the ships of a becalmed fleet, slowly twisting round, changing their position, and rolling from side to side, as silently as if they had been in harbour, or accompanied only by the faint, rippling sound tripping along the water line, as the copper below the bends alter-

nately sunk into the sea, or rose out of it, dripping wet, and shining as bright and clean as a new coin, from the constant friction of the ocean during the previous rapid passage across the Trade-winds.

But all this picturesque admiration changes to alarm when ships come so close as to risk a contact; for these motions, which appear so slow and gentle to the eye, are irresistible in their force; and as the chances are against the two vessels moving exactly in the same direction at the same moment, they must speedily grind or tear one another to pieces. Supposing them to come in contact side by side, the first roll would probably tear away the fore and main channels of both ships; the next roll, by interlacing the lower yards, and entangling the spars of one ship with the shrouds and backstays of the other, would in all likelihood bring down all three masts of both ships, not piecemeal, as the poet hath it, but in one furious crash. Beneath the ruins of the spars, the coils of rigging, and the enormous folds of canvass, might lie crushed many of the best hands, who, from being

always the foremost to spring forward in such seasons of danger, are surest to be sacrificed. After this first catastrophe, the ships would probably drift away from one another for a little while, only to tumble together again and again, till they had ground one another to the water's edge, and one or both of them would fill and go down. In such encounters it is impossible to stop the mischief, and oak and iron break and crumble in pieces, like sealing-wax and pie-crust. Many instances of such accidents are on record, but I never witnessed one.

To prevent these frightful rencontres, care is always taken to hoist out the boats in good time, if need be, to tow the ships apart, or, what is generally sufficient, to tow the ships' heads in opposite directions. I scarcely know why this should have the effect, but certainly it appears that, be the calm ever so complete, or dead, as the term is, a vessel generally forges ahead, or steals along imperceptibly in the direction she is looking to; possibly from the conformation of the hull.

Shortly after the Trade-wind left us, a

cloud rose in the south, which soon filled the whole air, and discharged upon us the most furious shower I ever beheld (except, perhaps, once at San Blas in Mexico), and such as I can compare to nothing but that flung on the traveller's head who ventures behind the sheet of water at Niagara. As few people try this experiment, I am afraid the comparison will go but little way to help the imagination in conceiving the violence of a tropical shower. I must mention, however, one very essential difference between the two cases. In the space between the rock and the cataract of Niagara, the deluge of water is accompanied by such violent gusts of wind, that the inexperienced person who ventures into this strangest but grandest of all caverns is in constant terror of being whisked off his legs, and thrown headlong into the horrid, boiling, roaring pool below. In the tropical showers above alluded to, the rain generally falls down in perpendicular lines of drops, or spouts, without a breath of wind, unaccompanied by thunder or any other noise, and in one great gush or splash, as if some prodigious reservoir had

been upset over the fleet from the edge of the cloud.

Our noble commander, delighted with the opportunity of replenishing his stock of water, called out, “Put shot on each side, and slack all the stops down, so that the awnings may slope inwards. Get buckets and empty casks to hand instantly!”

In a few minutes the awnings were half full of water, and a hole connected with a hose having been prepared beforehand near the lowest point, where the canvass was weighed down by the shot, a stream poured down as if a cock had been turned. Not a drop of this was lost; but being carried off, it was poured into a starting-tub at the hatchway, and so conveyed by a pipe to the casks in the hold. By the time the squall was over we had filled six or eight butts; and although not good to drink, from being contaminated by the tar from the ropes and sails, the water answered admirably for washing, which was our object in catching it.

Ever since the days of Captain Cook (the father of our present domestic economy on

board ship), it has been the practice to allow the crew two washing-days per week, on the details of which proceeding, and some other points of discipline, first introduced by that great voyager, I shall have occasion to touch at another time. At present I merely wish to give a hint to those who never tried the experiment, that there is a prodigious difference between a shirt scrubbed in salt water, and one which has been washed in fresh. We all know the misery of putting on wet clothes, or sleeping in damp sheets. Now, a shirt washed in salt water is really a great deal worse than either; because, in the cases alluded to, one may apply to the fire or the sun, and remedy the evil at the cost of a little time and trouble; but in the wretched predicament of putting on salt-water-washed linen, no such process avails any thing. You first dry your unhappy shirt, by exposing it to the sun or the fire till it seems as free from moisture as any bone; you then put it on, in hopes of enjoying the benefit of clean linen. Alas, not a whit of enjoyment follows! For if the air be in a humid state, or you are exposed to

exercise, the treacherous salt, which, when crystalised, has hidden itself in the fibres of the cloth, speedily deliquesces or melts, and you have all the tortures of being once more wrapped in moist drapery. In your agony, you pull it off, run to the galley-range, and toast it over again; or you hang it up in the fiery heat of the southern sun, and when not a particle of wet seems to remain, you draw it on a second time, fancying your job at last complete. But, miserable man, you are as ill off as ever; for the insidious enemy has merely retired out of sight, but still lurks so close, that no art we yet know of will expel him, save and except that of a good sound rinsing in fresh water.

Seeing, then, that there can hardly be any discomfort greater than what has been just described, I need scarcely add that there are few greater favours of the minor kind which a considerate captain may bestow on his crew, than giving them, whenever he possibly can, at least as much fresh water as will serve to carry off the abominable salt from their clothes, after they have first been well scoured in the

water of the ocean. Even this small allowance is a great comfort on those occasions, when a sufficient quantity cannot be allowed for performing the whole operation of washing from first to last. By a judicious management of the ship's regular stock, and, above all, by losing no opportunity of catching rain water, either during these tropical showers, or upon ordinary occasions of wet weather, an officer of any activity, who really possesses a good feeling towards his people, need seldom be without the means of giving to each man of his crew a gallon twice a-week during the longest voyage.

It was from an old and excellent officer I first learned that by proper and constant care this indulgence might almost always be granted. It is not easy, I freely admit, at all times, and in all climates, to keep a supply of washing-water on board ; and under most circumstances, it certainly requires more personal exertion than those persons are aware of, who have not given it their attention. But I feel persuaded that there does not exist an officer in the Navy who would not cheerfully take even

a great deal more trouble, if once made fully sensible of the unspeakable comfort which this very reasonable indulgence affords to the men under his care. To those who hold the doctrine that sailors are by their nature ungrateful, and that it is useless to grant them advantages which are not absolutely necessary, these recommendations will appear trivial and absurd. But, I trust, the prevalence of such unworthy sentiments in the Navy is becoming less and less every day. Officers are now generally pretty well aware, that the alleged ingratitude of their men belongs fully more to unreasonable expectations on their own part, than to any want of feeling on that of their crew. A captain ought to do what is right and kind, simply because it is right and kind ; and his conduct in this respect should not be influenced by the manner in which it is received ; at all events, he may be certain, that if his favours be not well received, the fault lies in his manner of giving them. Sailors have the most acute penetration possible on these occasions, and if the captain be influenced by any petty motives of selfish-

ness, or be prompted by any trashy desire to gain a flimsy popularity—in short, if his conduct be regulated by any wish except that of doing his duty uniformly and kindly, the Johnnies will see through it all, and either laugh at him or hate him, or both.

The art of granting a favour gracefully and usefully is one of far greater difficulty than is generally supposed; and as the command of a man-of-war is a grand school for its study, most truly happy shall I be if what I have said here or elsewhere shall induce a single brother-officer to turn his attention more earnestly than before to the domestic comforts of his people, one of the most delightful, and certainly one of the most useful branches of the arduous duties of a commander.

CHAPTER IX.

AQUATIC SPORTS.

ONE day, after we had lost the north-east Trade-wind, and when the fleet of China ships, with their companions, the two ships of war, were drifting about in the calm, more like logs of wood than any thing else, a furious squall, unperceived till it reached us, swept through the fleet. These violent tornadoes are generally called white squalls, from being unattended by those black heavy rain clouds which usually accompany such transient blasts.

On the occasion of ordinary squalls, even with the advantage of the warning given by rising clouds, we find it not always easy to escape their force unhurt. If the wind be fair, we feel a natural reluctance to shorten sail, so as to lose any portion of the good which Fortune is sending us; or, at all events, we do not wish to commence shortening sail till the squall is so

near that there is an absolute necessity for doing so. It will, therefore, often happen that inexperienced officers are deceived by the unexpected velocity with which the gust comes down upon them. And even the oldest sailors, if navigating in regions with which they have not become actually acquainted, are apt to miscalculate the time likely to elapse before the wind can touch them. In these cases, unless the men are very active, the sails are generally torn, and sometimes a mast or a yard is carried away. It is, besides, so often doubtful whether there is to be any wind in the squall, or it is to prove merely a plump of rain, that there seem few points of distinction more remarkable between the seamanship of an old and a young officer than their power of judging of this matter. To a man quite inexperienced, a squall may look in the highest degree threatening; he will order the topgallant clew-lines to be manned, place hands by the topsail haulyards, and lay along the main clew-garnets. His more experienced captain, however, being apprised of the squall's approach, steps on

deck, takes a hasty look to windward, and says to his young friend, the officer of the watch, "Never mind, there's nothing in it, it's only rain; keep the sails on her."

And although the older authority, nine times in ten, proves correct in his judgment, he might find it difficult, or even impossible, to tell exactly upon what his confidence rested. Sailors boast, indeed, of having an infallible test by which the point in question may be ascertained, their secret being clothed in the following rhymes, so to call them:

"If the rain's before the wind,
'Tis time to take the topsails in;
If the wind's before the rain,
Hoist your topsails up again."

By which we are taught to understand, that when the rain of a squall reaches the ship before the breeze which it contains, there will be danger in carrying on, and vice versâ. Some rule of this kind, adapted to the meridian of London, might perhaps save our good citizens many a sound ducking in Hyde Park of a Sunday afternoon; for I observe the crowd never take

the slightest precaution till the squall is right upon them, and then it is too late.

The practical knowledge alluded to, however, which is sometimes called professional tact, comes not by rhymes, but by experience alone ; and something akin to this, I presume, may be discovered in every calling. A painter, for example, might be utterly at a loss to communicate to a brother-artist the rules by which he has produced those effects, that he himself has flung, as it were, on the canvass, with a kind of intuitive confidence, scarcely conscious of effort. Many long and hard years of study, and myriads of forgotten trials, however, must have been gone through to give this enviable facility. So it is with seamanship, where it is so frequently indispensable to act with promptitude one way or the other.

No experience, however, can altogether guard against these sudden gusts or white squalls, since they make no shew, except, sometimes, by a rippling of the water along which they are sweeping. On the occasion above alluded to, there was not even this faint warning. The first ships of the

convoy, touched by the blast, were laid over almost on their beam ends, but in the next instant righted again, on the whole of their sails being blown clean out of the bolt-ropes. The Theban frigate and the Volage, then lying nearly in the centre of the fleet, were the only ships which saved an inch of canvass. This was owing chiefly to our having so many more hands on board, compared to the Indiamen, but partly to our having caught sight of the ruin brought on the vessels near us, just in time to let fly the sheets and halyards and get the yards down. But even then, with the utmost exertion of every man and boy on board, we barely succeeded in clewing all up, and preventing the sails from being blown to shreds.

When this hurricane of a moment had passed over us, and we had time to look round, not a rag was to be seen in the whole fleet; while the Wexford, a ship near us, had lost her three top-gallant masts and jib-boom, and, what was a far more serious misfortune, her fore-top mast was dangling over the bows. Part of

the fore-topsail was wrapped like a shawl round the lee cat-head, while the rest hung down in festoons from the collar of the fore-stay to the spritsail yard-arm. A stout party of seamen from each of the men-of-war were sent to assist in clearing the wreck, and getting up fresh spars. A light fair wind having succeeded to the calm in which we had been lolling about for many days before this squall came on, we took our wounded bird in tow, and made all sail once more towards the equinox, as old Robinson Crusoe calls the equator. By this time, also, the Chinamen had bent a new gang of sails, and were fast resuming their old stations in the appointed order of bearing, which it was our policy to keep up strictly, together with as many other of the formalities of a fleet of line-of-battle ships on a cruise as we could possibly maintain.

While we were thus stealing along pleasantly enough under the genial influence of this newly-found air, which as yet was confined to the upper sails, and every one was looking open-mouthed to the eastward to catch a gulp of cool air, or was congru-

tulating his neighbour on getting rid of the tiresome calm in which we had been so long half-roasted, half-suffocated, about a dozen flying fish rose out of the water, just under the fore-chains, and skimmed away to windward at the height of ten or twelve feet above the surface. I have already mentioned, that the longest flight of these singular fish is about an eighth of an English mile, or two hundred yards, which they perform in somewhat more than half a minute. These flights vary from the extreme length mentioned above to a mere skip out of the water. Generally speaking, they fly to a considerable distance in a straight line in the wind's eye, and then gradually turn off to leeward. But sometimes the flying fish merely skims the surface, so as to touch the tops of the successive waves, without rising and falling to follow the undulations of the sea. There is a prevalent idea afloat, but I know not how just it may be, that they can fly no longer than their wings or fins remain wet. That they rise as high as twenty feet out of the water is certain, from their being sometimes

found in the channels of a line-of-battle ship; and they frequently fly into a 74-gun-ship's main-deck ports. On a frigate's forecastle and gangways, also, elevations which may be taken at eighteen or twenty feet, or more, they are often found. I remember seeing one, about nine inches in length, and weighing not less, I should suppose, than half a pound, skim into the Volage's main-deck port just abreast of the gangway. One of the main-topmen was coming up the quarter-deck ladder at the moment, when the flying fish, entering the port, struck the astonished mariner on the temple, knocked him off the step, and very nearly laid him sprawling.

I was once in a prize, a low Spanish schooner, not above two feet and a half out of the water, when we used to pick up flying fish enough about the decks in the morning to give us a capital breakfast. They are not unlike whittings to the taste, though rather firmer, and very dry. They form, I am told, a considerable article of food for the negroes in the harbours of the West Indies. The method of catch-

ing them at night is thus described :— In the middle of the canoe a light is placed on the top of a pole, towards which object it is believed these fish always dart, while on both sides of the canoe a net is spread to a considerable distance, supported by out-riggers above the surface of the water ; the fish dash at the light, pass it, and fall into the net on the other side.

Shortly after observing the cluster of flying fish rise out of the water, we discovered two or three dolphins ranging past the ship, in all their beauty, and watched with some anxiety to see one of those aquatic chases of which our friends the Indiamen had been telling us such wonderful stories. We had not long to wait, for the ship, in her progress through the water, soon put up another shoal of these little things, which, as the others had done, took their flight directly to windward. A large dolphin, which had been keeping company with us abreast of the weather gangway at the depth of two or three fathoms, and, as usual, glistening most beautifully in the sun, no sooner

detected our poor dear little friends take wing, than he turned his head towards them, and, darting to the surface, leaped from the water with a velocity little short, as it seemed, of a cannon ball. But although the impetus with which he shot himself into the air gave him an initial velocity greatly exceeding that of the flying fish, the start which his fated prey had got enabled them to keep ahead of him for a considerable time.

The length of the dolphin's first spring could not be less than ten yards; and after he fell we could see him gliding like lightning through the water for a moment, when he again rose and shot forwards with considerably greater velocity than at first, and, of course, to a still greater distance. In this manner the merciless pursuer seemed to stride along the sea with fearful rapidity, while his brilliant coat sparkled and flashed in the sun quite splendidly. As he fell headlong on the water at the end of each huge leap, a series of circles were sent far over the still surface, which lay as smooth as a mirror;

for the breeze, although enough to set the royals and top-gallant studding sails asleep, was hardly as yet felt below.

The group of wretched flying fish, thus hotly pursued, at length dropped into the sea ; but we were rejoiced to observe that they merely touched the top of the swell, and scarcely sunk in it, at least they instantly set off again in a fresh and even more vigorous flight. It was particularly interesting to observe that the direction they now took was quite different from the one in which they had set out, implying but too obviously that they had detected their fierce enemy, who was following them with giant steps along the waves, and now gaining rapidly upon them. His terrific pace, indeed, was two or three times as swift as theirs — poor little things !

The greedy dolphin, however, was fully as quick-sighted as the flying fish which were trying to elude him ; for whenever they varied their flight in the smallest degree, he lost not the tenth part of a second in shaping a new course, so as to cut off the chase, while they, in a manner really not unlike that of the hare, doubled

more than once upon their pursuer. But it was soon too plainly to be seen that the strength and confidence of the flying fish were fast ebbing. Their flights became shorter and shorter, and their course more fluttering and uncertain, while the enormous leaps of the dolphin appeared to grow only more vigorous at each bound. Eventually, indeed, we could see, or fancied we could see, that this skilful sea-sportsman arranged all his springs with such an assurance of success, that he contrived to fall, at the end of each, just under the very spot on which the exhausted flying fish were about to drop! Sometimes this catastrophe took place at too great a distance for us to see from the deck exactly what happened; but on our mounting high into the rigging, we may be said to have been in at the death; for then we could discover that the unfortunate little creatures, one after another, either popped right into the dolphin's jaws as they lighted on the water, or were snapped up instantly afterwards.

It was impossible not to take an active part with our pretty little friends of the

weaker side, and accordingly we very speedily had our revenge. The middies and the sailors, delighted with the chance, rigged out a dozen or twenty lines from the jib-boom-end and spritsail yard-arms, with hooks baited merely with bits of tin, the glitter of which resembles so much that of the body and wings of the flying fish, that many a proud dolphin, making sure of a delicious morsel, leaped in rapture at the deceitful prize.

It may be well to mention, that the dolphin of sailors is not the fish so called by the ancient poets. Ours, which, I learn from the *Encyclopædia*, is the *Coryphæna hippurus* of naturalists, is totally different from their *Delphinus phocæna*, termed by us the porpoise. How these names have shifted places I know not, but there seems little doubt that the ancient dolphin of the poets, I mean that on the back of which Dan Arion took a passage when he was tossed overboard, is neither more nor less than our porpoise.* For the

* Ovid. *Fasti*, lib. ii. 117. *Encyclopædia Britan.* vol. v. p. 339.

rest, he is a very poetical and pleasing fish to look at, affords excellent sport in catching, and, when properly dressed, is really not bad eating.

It happened in a ship I commanded that a porpoise was struck about half an hour before the cabin dinner; and I gave directions, as a matter of course, to my steward to dress a dish of steaks, cut well clear of the thick coating of blubber. It so chanced that none of the crew had ever before seen a fish of this kind taken, and in consequence there arose doubts amongst them whether or not it was good or even safe eating. The word, however, being soon passed along the decks, that orders had been given for some slices of the porpoise to be cooked for the captain's table, a deputation from forward was appointed to proceed as near to the cabin door as the etiquettes of the service allowed, in order to establish the important fact of the porpoise being eatable. The dish was carried in, its contents speedily discussed, and a fresh supply having been sent for, the steward was, of course, intercepted in his way to the cook. "I say, Capewell,"

cried one of the hungry delegates, “ did the captain really eat any of the porpoise?”

“ Eat it!” exclaimed the steward, look at that!” at the same time lifting off the cover, and shewing a dish as well cleared as if it had previously been freighted with veal cutlets, and was now on its return from the midshipmen’s birth.

“ Ho! ho!” sung out Jack, running back to the forecastle; “ if the skipper eats porpoise, I don’t see why we should be nice; so here goes!” Then pulling away the great clasp-knife which always hangs by a cord round the neck of a seaman, he plunged it into the sides of the fish, and, after separating the outside rind of blubber, detached half a dozen pounds of the red meat, which, in texture and taste, and in the heat of its blood, resembles beef, though very coarse. His example was so speedily followed by the rest of the ship’s company, that when I walked forward, after dinner, in company with the doctor, to take the post mortem view of the porpoise more critically than before, we found the whole had been broiled and eaten within half an hour after I had

unconsciously given, by my example, an official sanction to the feast.

Porpoises almost invariably go in shoals, and sometimes in such vast numbers as to cover the whole visible extent of the sea. They appear to delight exceedingly in playing round a ship when one falls in their way ; for they will even deviate from their own course, and accompany her's for some time ; and such is their speed, that however fast a vessel may be sailing, they can shoot ahead, dart athwart hause, and even go repeatedly round her, though her rate be ten knots an hour, and all apparently with the utmost ease. Their gambols on these occasions are sometimes very amusing. I have often seen them leap high out of the water, and, while in the air, twirl themselves completely round. I am not quite sure that I have not seen them make what is called a somerset in the air, by turning tail over head. Their form appears very graceful when seen in the water ; and I remember, when a midshipman in the old *Leander*, on my first voyage, (in 1802,) being persuaded by one of the lieutenants that these porpoises were

salmon—sea salmon, as he called them. This wag of an officer was one of the conspirators who so murderously took away the life of our favourite dog, poor dear Shakings.

The porpoises appear to have some very rapid method of communication amongst themselves; for they not only proceed in myriads in one straight course, but often amuse themselves by leaping in considerable numbers out of the water, with such perfect identity of time in all their movements, that on hearing them fall we might fancy them but one fish. For hours at a time I have leaned over the gangway railing, when the ship has been going at the rate of ten or eleven miles, merely to watch them gliding alongside of us in pairs, leaping simultaneously out of the water. At night this companionship is always particularly striking; but most so when the sea, either from some inherent phosphorescent property, or from the presence of animalculæ, possesses the quality of giving out light upon being agitated. On such occasions, when the foam dashed off from the ship's bows resembles molten silver,

and the train in her wake stretches far astern along the sea, like the tail of a comet across the sky, the track of the porpoise is likewise marked in the most beautiful style that can well be imagined. Besides trailing behind this long unbroken line of fire, each fish is surrounded by a sort of halo, or glow of bright bluish sparks, and the form of its head and body can then be distinctly seen, or even the slightest movement of the tail discovered fully better than in daylight. The lustre of this mysterious illumination is at times so great, that one may read off the seconds-hand of a watch by its help alone. Indeed, the light caused by the foam on the lee-side of a ship, when much pressed with sail, and the agitation of the water becomes considerable, often casts a distinct glow on the bulge, or belly of the courses, and reaching as far up as the foot of the topsails, may almost be detected on the foot topgallant-sails in a very dark night.

There is a popular belief amongst seamen, that the wind may be expected from the quarter to which a shoal of porpoises are observed to steer; but I suspect their

capacity as meteorologists is about on a par with that of geese, the value of whose flights is held by many worthy and venerable matrons to be pretty nearly as well established as the fact of hogs actually seeing the wind. So far, however, from our respecting the speculations of these submarine philosophers, every art is used to drag them out of their native element, and to pass them through the fire to the insatiable Molochs of the lower-decks and cockpits of His Majesty's ships, a race amongst whom the constant supply of the best provisions appears to produce only an increase of appetite.

One harpoon, at least, is always kept in readiness for action in the fore part of the ship. The sharpest and strongest of these deadly weapons is generally stopped, or fastened, to the fore-tack bumpkin, a spar some ten or twelve feet long, projecting from the bows of a ship on each side like the horns of a snail, to which the tack or lower corner of the foresail is drawn down when the ship is on a wind. This spar, which affords good footing, not being raised many feet above the water, while it

is clear of the bow, and very nearly over the spot where the porpoises glide past, when shooting across the ship's fore-foot, is eagerly occupied by the most active and expert harpooner on board, as soon as the report has been spread that a shoal, or, as the sailors call it, a 'school' of porpoises are round the ship. There is another favourite station which is speedily filled on these occasions, I mean alongside of the slight-looking, but strong, and not ungraceful apparatus projecting perpendicularly downwards from the end of the bowsprit. This spar is not inaptly called the dolphin-striker, from its appearing to dash into the waves as the ship pitches; perhaps, it may have acquired its name from its being so capital a position from which to strike that fish. The lower end of the spar is connected with the outer end of the jib-boom by means of a stout rope, which, after passing through its extremity, extends to the ship; and it is upon this guy that the fortunate person who wields the harpoon fixes himself. Any picture of a ship will make this description intelligible; but it may assist the

imagination to mention, that the purpose of this rope is to keep the end of the jib-boom from springing up, precisely as a martingal holds down the head of a horse; which analogy, no doubt, has led sailors to give the name of martingal-stay to the guy in question.

The harpoon is a triangular, or rather a heart-shaped, barbed weapon, somewhat larger than a man's hand, and in the centre about as thick as his knuckles. Its point and edges are made of iron so soft that they can easily be brought to a rough edge by means of a file. Until I read Captain Scoresby's most interesting account of the Arctic Regions, I always fancied that the point of the whale-harpoon, which is exactly the same as that used by us to take the porpoise, was made of steel; but he explains that it is left purposely soft, that it may be sharpened, even by scraping it with a knife. This javelin-head, or, as it is technically called by whalers, the 'mouth,' is connected by a slender arm or shank, terminating in a socket. The barbed head, or mouth, is eight inches long, and six broad; the

shank, with its socket, two feet and a half long. The shank is not quite half an inch in diameter; and as this part is liable to be forcibly and suddenly extended, twisted, and bent, it requires to be made of the toughest and most pliable iron.

“That kind,” says Scoresby, “which is of the most approved tenacity is made of old horse-shoe nails, or stubs, which are formed into small rods, and two or three of these welded together; so that should a flaw happen to occur in any one of the rods, the strength of the whole might still be depended on. Some manufacturers enclose a quantity of stub-iron in a cylinder of best foreign iron, and form the shank of the harpoon out of a single rod. A test sometimes used for trying the sufficiency of a harpoon, is to wind its shank round a bolt of inch iron, in the form of a close spiral, then to unwind it again, and put it into a straight form. If it bears this without injury in the cold state, it is considered as excellent. The breaking of a harpoon is of no less importance than the value of a whale, which is sometimes estimated at 1000*l*.

sterling. This consideration has induced many ingenious persons to turn their attention towards improving the construction and security of this instrument; but, though various alterations have been suggested, such as forming the shank of plies of wire, and adding one or two lateral barbs, they have all given place to the simplicity of the ancient harpoon.”*

Having described the harpoon, we may resume our fishing operations, which possess a remarkable degree of interest when the shoal of porpoises is numerous. Half the ship's company are generally clustered about the bowsprit, the head, and any other spot commanding a good view of the sport. When a mid, I have often perched myself like a sea-bird at the fore-yard-arm, or nestled into the fore-topmast staysail netting, till I saw the harpoon cast with effect by some older and stronger arm. A piece of small, but stout line, called, I think, the foreganger, is spliced securely to the shank of the harpoon. To the end of this line is at-

* Scoresby's Arctic Regions, vol. ii. p. 225.

tached any small rope that lies handiest on the forecastle, probably the top-gallant clew-line, or the jib down-haul. The rope, before being made fast to the fore-ganger, is rove through a block attached to some part of the bowsprit, or to the foremost swifter of the fore-rigging; and a gang of hands are always ready to take hold of the end, and run the fish right out of the water when pierced by the iron.

The harpooner, it will be understood, has nothing to attend to but the mere act of striking his object; and there are few exploits in which the dexterity of one person is more conspicuous over that of another, than in delivering the harpoon. I have heard Captain Scoresby say, that when a whale is struck, it is an object of importance to drive the weapon socket-deep into the blubber, or outer rind, of the floating monster; but in the case of the porpoise, the true point of skill appears to lie in the aim alone; for the mere weight of the instrument, with its loaded staff, is sufficient to lodge the barbs in the body of the fish, and in

many cases to carry it right through to the other side.

The strength of the porpoise must be very great, for I have seen him twist a whale harpoon several times round, and eventually tear himself off by main force. On this account, it is of consequence to get the floundering gentleman on board with the least possible delay after the fish is struck. Accordingly, the harpooner, the instant he has made a good hit, bawls out, "Haul away! haul away!" upon which the men stationed at the line run away with it, and the struggling wretch is raised high into the air, as if still in the act of performing one of his own gambols. Two or three of the smartest hands have in the meantime prepared what is called a running bowline knot, or noose, the nature of which may be readily described by saying that although it slips up, or renders, very easily, it is perfectly secure, without being subject to jamming, as that embarrassing entanglement is called when a knot or bend becomes inextricably fixed. This running bowline, of which several are always made ready

beforehand, is placed by hand round the body of the porpoise, or it may be cast, like the South American lasso, over its tail, and then, but not till then, can the capture be considered quite secure. I have seen many a gallant prize of this kind fairly transfixed with the harpoon, and rattled like a shot up to the block, where it was hailed by the shouts of the victors as the source of a certain feast, and yet lost after all, either by the line breaking, or the dart coming out during the vehement struggles of the fish.

I remember once seeing a porpoise accidentally struck by a minor description of fish-spear called a grains, a weapon quite inadequate for such a service. The cord by which it was held being much too weak, soon broke, and off dashed the wounded fish, right in the wind's eye, at a prodigious rate, with the staff erected on its back, like a signal-post. The poor wretch was instantly accompanied, or pursued, by myriads of his own species, whose instinct, it is said, teaches them to follow any track of blood, and even to devour their unfortunate fel-

low fish. I rather doubt the fact of their cannibalism, but am certain that, whenever a porpoise is struck and escapes, he is followed by all the others, and the ship is deserted by the shoal in a few seconds. In the instance just mentioned, the grains with which the porpoise was struck had been got ready for spearing a dolphin; but the man in whose hands it happened to be, not being an experienced harpooner, could not resist the opportunity of darting his weapon into the first fish that offered a fair mark.

The dolphin, the bonito, and the albacore, are sometimes caught with the grains, but generally by means of lines baited either with bits of tin, or with pieces of the flying-fish, when any are to be had. In fine weather, especially between the tropics, when the whole surface of the sea is often covered with them, a dozen lines are hung from the jib-boom end and spritsail yard, all so arranged, that when the ship sends forward, the hook, with its glittering bait, barely touches the water, but rises from it when the ship is raised up by the swell. The grains spoken of

above resembles nothing so much that I know of as the trident which painters thrust into the hands of Daddy Neptune, when it pleases them to represent the god of the sea, sitting all ready for a swim (*sans culottes*, as he ought to be), in his dolphin-drawn cab. If my nautical recollections, however, serve me correctly, this spear has five prongs, not three, and sometimes there are two sets, placed in lines at right angles to one another. The upper end of the staff being loaded with lead, it falls down and turns over the fish, which is then drawn on board on the top of the grains, as a potato or a herring might be presented on the point of a fork.

The dolphin is eaten and generally relished by every one, though certainly a plaguy dry fish. It is often cut into slices and fried like salmon, or boiled and soured in vinegar, to be eaten cold. The bonito is a coarser fish, and becomes not very bad eating only by the copious use of port-wine. Any thing, say the cooks, may be made palatable by rich sauces; a maxim we tried hard to illustrate in the midshipman's birth with such slender

means as we possessed ; and many a time have I feasted on what was but too correctly called mock-turtle soup, designated, in the choice dialect of the cockpit, Pig's-head negus.

On the 24th of May, the day before crossing the equator, I saw the grandest display of all these different kinds of fish which it has ever been my fortune to meet with. In my journal, written on that day, I find some things related, of which I have scarcely any recollection, and certainly have never again witnessed in the twenty years which have elapsed since. A bonito, it appears, darted out of the water after a flying-fish, open-mouthed, and so true was the direction of his leap, that he actually closed with the chase in the air, and sought to snap it up ; but owing to some error in his calculation, the top of his head striking the object of pursuit, sent it spinning off in a direction quite different from that which his own momentum obliged him to follow. A number of those huge birds, the albatrosses, were soaring over the face of the waters, and the flying-fish, when rising into the air to avoid their

natural enemies the dolphin and bonito, were frequently caught by these poaching birds, to the very reasonable disappointment of the sporting fish below, on whose manor they were trespassing. These intruders proceeded not altogether with impunity, however; for we hooked several of them, who, confident in their own sagacity and strength of wing, swooped eagerly at the baited hooks towed far astern of the ship, and were thus drawn on board, screaming and flapping their wings in a very ridiculous plight. To render this curious circle of mutual destruction quite complete, though it may diminish our sympathy for the persecuted flying-fish, I ought to mention, that on the same day one dropped on board in the middle of its flight, and in its throat another small fish was found half swallowed, but still alive!

All this may be considered, more or less, as mere sport, serving to relieve the tedium of a long calm, or contributing, in a small degree, to the scanty luxuries of the table on a protracted voyage. But in the capture of the shark, a less amiable, or, I may say, a more ferocious spirit is

sure to prevail. There would seem, indeed, to be a sort of perpetual and hereditary war waged between sailors and sharks, like that said to exist between the Esquimaux and the Indians of North America, where, as each of the belligerents is under the full belief that every death, whether natural or violent, is caused by the machinations of the other side, there is no hope of peace between them, as long as the high conflicting parties shall be subject to the laws of mortality.

In like manner, I fear, that in all future times, as in all times past, when poor Jack falls overboard in Madras roads, or in Port Royal harbour, he will be liable to be crunched between the shark's quadruple or quintuple rows of serrated teeth, with as merciless a spirit of enjoyment as Jack repays the compliment withal, when, in his turn, he catches his enemy on his decks. Certainly, I have never seen the savage part of our nature peep out more clearly than upon these occasions, when a whole ship's company, captain, officers, and young gentlemen inclusive, shout in triumphant exultation over the body of a

captive shark, floundering in impotent rage on the poop or forecastle. The capture always affords high and peculiar sport, for it is one in which every person on board sympathises, and, to a certain extent, takes a share. Like a fox-chase, it is ever new, and draws within its vortex every description of person. The lunarian, busy taking distances, crams his sextant hastily into its case; the computer, working out his longitude, shoves his books on one side; the marine officer abandons his eternal flute; the doctor starts from his nap; the purser resigns the Complete Book; and every man and boy, however engaged, rushes on deck to see the villain die. Even the monkey, if there be one on board, takes a vehement interest in the whole progress of this wild scene. I remember once observing Jacko running backwards and forwards along the after-part of the poop hammock-netting, grinning, screaming, and chattering at such a rate, that, as it was nearly calm, he was heard all over the decks.

“What’s the matter with you, Master Mona?” said the quarter-master; for the

animal came from Teneriffe, and preserved his Spanish cognomen. Jacko replied not, but merely stretching his head over the railing, stared with his eyes almost bursting from his head, and by the intensity of his grin bared his teeth and gums nearly from ear to ear.

The sharp curved dorsal fin of a huge shark was now seen, rising about six inches above the water, and cutting the glazed surface of the sea by as fine a line as if a sickle had been drawn along.

“Messenger! run to the cook for a piece of pork,” cried the captain, taking command with as much glee as if it had been an enemy’s cruiser he was about to engage.

“Where’s your hook, quarter-master?”

“Here, sir, here!” cried the fellow, feeling the point, and declaring it as sharp as any lady’s needle, and in the next instant piercing with it a huge junk of rusty pork, weighing four or five pounds; for nothing, scarcely, is too large or too high in flavour for the stomach of a shark.

The hook, which is as thick as one’s little finger, has a curvature about as large

as that of a man's hand when half closed, and is from six to eight inches in length, with a formidable barb. This fierce-looking grappling-iron is furnished with three or four feet of chain, a precaution which is absolutely necessary ; for a voracious shark will sometimes gobble the bait so deep into his stomach, that but for the chain he would snap through the rope by which the hook is held, as easily as if he were nipping the head off an asparagus.

A good strong line, generally the end of the mizen topsail-haulyards, being made fast to the chain, the bait is cast into the ship's wake ; for it is very seldom so dead a calm that a vessel has not some small motion through the water. I think I have remarked, that at sea the sharks are most apt to make their appearance when the ship is going along at a rate of somewhat less than a mile an hour, a speed which barely brings her under command of the rudder, or gives her what is technically called steerage-way.

A shark, like a midshipman, is generally very hungry ; but in the rare cases when he is not in good appetite, he sails

slowly up to the bait, smells to it, and gives it a poke with his shovel-nose, turning it over and over. He then edges off to the right or left, as if he apprehended mischief, but soon returns again, to enjoy the delicious haut goût, as the sailors term the flavour of the damaged pork, of which a piece is always selected, if it can be found.

While this coquetry, or shyness, is exhibited by John Shark, the whole after-part of the ship is so clustered with heads, that not an inch of spare room is to be had for love or money. The rigging, the mizen-top, and even the gaff, out to the very peak; the hammock-nettings and the quarters, almost down to the counter, are stuck over with breathless spectators, speaking in whispers, if they venture to speak at all, or can find leisure for any thing but fixing their gaze on the monster, who as yet is free to roam the ocean, but who, they trust, will soon be in their power. I have seen this go on for an hour together; after which the shark has made up his mind to have nothing to say to us, and either swerved away to windward, if there be any breeze at all, or dived so

deep that his place could be detected only by a faint touch or flash of white many fathoms down. The loss of a Spanish galleon, in chase, I am persuaded, could hardly cause more bitter regret, or call forth more intemperate expressions of anger and impatience, than the failure in hooking a shark is always sure to produce on board a ship at sea.

On the other hand, I suppose the first symptom of an enemy's flag coming down in the fight was never hailed with greater joy than is felt by a ship's crew on the shark turning round to seize the bait. The preparatory symptoms of this intention are so well known to every one on board, that, the instant they begin to appear, a greedy whisper of delight passes from mouth to mouth amongst the assembled multitude; every eye is lighted up, and such as have not bronzed their cheeks by too long exposure to sun and wind to betray any change of colour, may be seen to alter their hue from pale to red, and back to pale again, like the tints on the sides of the dying dolphin.

It is supposed by seamen that the shark

must of necessity turn on his back before he can bite any thing ; and, generally speaking, he certainly does so turn himself before he takes the bait. But this arises from two circumstances ; one of them accidental, and belonging to the particular occasion, the other arising out of the peculiar conformation and position of his mouth. When a bait is towed astern of a ship that has any motion through the water at all, it is necessarily brought to the surface, or nearly so. This of course obliges the shark to bite at it from below ; and as his mouth is placed under his chin, not over it, like that of a Christian, he must turn nearly on his back before he can seize the floating piece of meat in which the hook is concealed. Even if he does not turn completely round, he is forced to slue himself, as it is called, so far as to shew some portion of his white belly. The instant the white skin flashes on the sight of the expectant crew, a subdued cry, or murmur of satisfaction, is heard amongst the crowd ; but no one speaks, for fear of alarming the shark.

Sometimes, at the very instant the bait

is cast over the stern, the shark flies at it with such eagerness, that he actually springs partially out of the water. This, however, is rare. On these occasions he gorges the bait, the hook, and a foot or two of the chain, without any mastication or delay, and darts off with his treacherous prize with such prodigious velocity and force, that it makes the rope crack again as soon as the whole coil is drawn out. In general, however, he goes more leisurely to work, and seems rather to suck in the bait than to bite at it. Much dexterity is required in the hand which holds the line at this moment; for a bungler is apt to be too precipitate, and to jerk away the hook before it has got far enough down the shark's maw. Our greedy friend, indeed, is never disposed to relinquish what may once have passed his formidable batteries of teeth; but the hook, by a premature tug of the line, may fix itself in a part of the jaw so weak, that it gives way in the violent struggle which always follows. The secret of the sport is, to let the voracious monster gulp down the huge mess of pork, and then to give the rope

a violent pull, by which the barbed point, quitting the edge of the bait, buries itself in the coats of the victim's throat or stomach. As the shark is not a personage to submit patiently to such treatment, it will not be well for any one whose foot happens to be accidentally on the coil of the rope, for, when the hook is first fixed, it spins out like the log-line of a ship going twelve knots.

The suddenness of the jerk with which the poor devil is brought up, when he has reached the length of his tether, often turns him quite over on the surface of the water. Then commence the loud cheers, taunts, and other sounds of rage and triumph, so long suppressed. A steady pull is insufficient to carry away the line, but it sometimes happens that the violent struggles of the shark, when too speedily drawn up, snaps either the rope or the hook, and so he gets off, to digest the remainder as he best can. It is, accordingly, held the best practice to play him a little, with his mouth at the surface, till he becomes somewhat exhausted. During this operation, one

could almost fancy the enraged animal is conscious of the abuse which is flung down upon him ; for, as he turns and twists and flings himself about, his eye glares upwards with a ferocity of purpose which makes the blood tingle in a swimmer's veins, as he thinks of the hour when it may be his turn to writhe under the tender mercies of his sworn foe !

No sailor, therefore, ought ever to think of hauling a shark on board merely by the rope fastened to the hook ; for, however impotent his struggles may generally be in the water, they are rarely unattended with risk when the rogue is drawn half way up. To prevent the line breaking or the hook snapping, or the jaw being torn away, the device formerly described, of a running bow-line knot, is always adopted. This noose, being slipped down the rope and passed over the monster's head, is made to jam at the point of junction of the tail with the body. When this is once fixed, the first act of the piece is held to be complete, and the vanquished enemy is afterwards easily drawn over the taffrail and flung on the deck, to the unspeakable

delight of all hands. But although the shark is out of his element, he has by no means lost his power of doing mischief; and I would advise no one to come within range of the tail, or trust his toes too near the animal's mouth. The blow of a tolerably large-sized shark's tail might break a man's leg; and I have seen a three-inch hide tiller-rope bitten more than half through, full ten minutes after the wretch had been dragged about the quarter-deck, and had made all his victors keep at the most respectful distance. I remember hearing the late Dr. Wollaston, with his wonted ingenuity, suggest a method for measuring the strength of a shark's bite. If a smooth plate of lead, he thought, were thrust into the fish's mouth, the depth which his teeth should pierce the lead would furnish a sort of scale of the force exerted.

I need scarcely mention, that when a shark is floundering about, the quarter-deck becomes a scene of pretty considerable confusion; and if there be blood on the occasion, as there generally is, from all this rough usage, the stains are not to

be got rid of without a week's scrubbing, and many a growl from the captain of the afterguard. For the time, however, all such considerations are superseded, that is to say, if the commander himself takes an interest in the sport, and he must be rather a spoony skipper that does not. If he be indifferent about the fate of the shark, it is speedily dragged forward to the forecastle, amidst the kicks, thumps, and execrations of the conquerors, who very soon terminate his miserable career by stabbing him with their knives, boarding pikes, and tomahawks, like so many wild Indians.

The first operation is always to deprive him of his tail, which is seldom an easy matter, it not being at all safe to come too near; but some dexterous hand, familiar with the use of the broad axe, watches for a quiet moment, and at a single blow severs it from the body. He is then closed with by another, who leaps across the prostrate foe, and with an adroit cut rips him open from snout to tail, and the tragedy is over, so far as the struggles and sufferings of the principal actor are

concerned. There always follows, however, the most lively curiosity on the part of the sailors to learn what the shark has got stowed away in his inside; but they are often disappointed, for the stomach is generally empty. I remember one famous exception, indeed, when a very large fellow was caught on board the *Alceste*, in Anjeer Roads at Java, when we were proceeding to China with the embassy under Lord Amherst. A number of ducks and hens which had died in the night, were, as usual, thrown overboard in the morning, besides several baskets, and many other minor things, such as bundles of shavings and bits of cordage, all which things were found in this huge sea monster's inside. But what excited most surprise and admiration was the hide of a buffalo, killed on board that day for the ship's company's dinner. The old sailor who had cut open the shark stood with a foot on each side, and drew out the articles one by one from the huge cavern into which they had been indiscriminately drawn. When the operator came at last to the buffalo's skin, he held it up before him like a curtain,

and exclaimed, "There, my lads; d'ye see that! He has swallowed a buffalo, but he could not dis-gest the hide!"

I have never been so unfortunate as to see a man bitten by a shark, though, in calm weather, it is usual to allow the people to swim about the ship. It would seem that they are disturbed by the splashing and other noises of so many persons, and keep at a distance; for although they are often observed swimming near the ship both before and after the men have been bathing, they very rarely come near the swimmers. I remember, once, indeed, at Bermuda, seeing a shark make a grab at a midshipman's heel, just as he was getting into the boat alongside. This youngster, who, with one or two others, had been swimming about for an hour, was the last of the party in the water. No shark had been seen during the whole morning; but just as he was drawing his foot into the boat, the fish darted from the bottom. Fortunately for my old messmate, there was no time for the shark to make the half turn of the body necessary to bring

his mouth to bear; and thus my friend escaped, by half an inch, a fate which, besides its making one shudder to think of, would have deprived the service of an active young officer, now deservedly in the higher ranks of his profession.

CHAPTER X.

A MAN OVERBOARD !

THE strange and almost savage ceremonies used at sea on crossing the equator have been so often described, that a voyager, at this time of day, may be well excused for omitting in his narrative any minute account of such wild proceedings.

If the circumstances which a traveller falls in with abroad happen to be essentially curious in themselves, or if they be characteristic of any particular set of men or stage of manners, it does not seem to matter where the scenes are laid, nor how often they have been described. Perhaps it may even prove, that when things are possessed of much intrinsic interest, the very multiplicity of previous descriptions will rather help than stand in the way of subsequent accounts, provided these be written with a degree of skill worthy of

the subject. If, indeed, such things, no matter how well known to us, can once more be brought home, as it is well called, to the feeling and understanding of the reader, by some of those graphic touches which are not the result of chance, but which true artists alone can command, and if the subject he has got hold of be good in itself, it will generally be all the better for the last writer that it should have been marred by previous daubers. We may even, I think, go further, and assert, that in the case supposed, it will be in favour of the writer who knows what he is about, that his topic should have been not only repeatedly but well treated by previous authors. Who can doubt, for instance, that the *Diary of an Invalid* owes its chief interest to the hackneyed nature of the topic? We are enchanted to recognise incidents and scenes the most familiar to our thoughts trimmed up for fresh inspection by a scholar and a gentleman, who to much knowledge of his subject, and of the world generally, superadds a rare felicity of expression, and the happy knack of giving new interest to all he

touches, especially to those things with which we are already most familiarly acquainted.

On the same grounds, if a man of genius, minute and varied local information, and correct taste, were to write a book, and call it "London," it would assuredly outrun in freshness of interest, in the opinion even of the Londoners themselves, all other books of travels. Whatever talents, in short, an author may possess, their most touching and popular exercise will generally be found to lie in those departments with which his readers are most familiar. When Taglioni descends from her pirouettes, and dances the Minuet de la Cour or the Gavotte, or Paganini leaves off his miracles of sound, and plays some simple air which is well known to every one, we feel, not indeed the same astonishment as before, but ten times more real pleasure. Thus, too, such a novel as *Pride and Prejudice* probably derives its greatest charm from the characters and incidents being such as we are already well acquainted with, either from personal observation, or from a thousand previous descriptions.

Many writers, however, fall into the mistake of imagining that every thing will bear this degree of handling, and forget that, while the ductility of fine gold is almost infinite, every other metal has its limit. This analogy will hold in all the fine arts, and perhaps in none more than in the art of composition, whether in prose or verse. When will the poets exhaust the good old topics of love and beauty? or painters fail to discover, in mountain scenery, and in the sunsets of summer, varieties of tints, and lights, and shades, far beyond all their power of colouring? On the other hand, has not the whole strength of one celebrated school of painting been unequal to impart true interest and what has been termed graceful pleasure to vulgar images? Has not even the mighty Childe Harold compelled us to withdraw much of our respect for his genius by seeking to describe what is essentially vicious and degrading?

It is on this account, I suspect (to go from great things to small), that no author, except perhaps one, whom I have ever had the fortune to meet with, has contrived

to impart the smallest degree of genuine interest to those absurd scenes which take place on board ship when crossing the line. The whole affair, indeed, is preposterous in its conception ; and, I must say, rather brutal in its execution. Notwithstanding all this, however, I have not only permitted it to go on in ships which I commanded, but have even encouraged it, and set it agoing when the men themselves were in doubt. Its evil is transient, if any evil there be ; while it certainly affords Jack a topic for a month beforehand, and a fortnight afterwards ; and if so ordered as to keep its monstrosities within the limits of strict discipline (which is easy enough), it may even be made to add to the authority of the officers, instead of weakening their influence.

I am hardly classic enough to compare these equatorial shaving matches, as they are called, with the Saturnalia of Rome ; but I know that some crews are most improperly permitted by the captain, even in ships of war, to take great liberties with the officers. So far, indeed, had this grown into a custom, that I can per-

fectly well remember the time when such license was regarded almost as a right by the sailors. In many merchant vessels, and even in some regular East India ships, it is still, I believe, more or less so considered ; but I should hope that in no ship of war having the smallest pretensions to good order, would any such doctrine be now maintained ; or if asserted, as it sometimes is, by one party, would it not be instantly and peremptorily denied. There is, perhaps, some advantage in making naval seamen feel that they are living under a very different regime from what they have been accustomed to in the merchant service ; and if, in the wildest stages of these extravagant proceedings, when they are grating the skin from off one another's faces, sousing the unfortunate novices in tubs of dirty water, and kicking up the most Cherokee sort of antics, they can still be made to respect the authority even of the littlest boy on board who wears a uniform, they will certainly be less likely to depart from established usage at other seasons, when not so excited.

In a well-regulated ship, within one hour from the time when these scenes of riot are at their height, order is restored, the decks are washed and swabbed up, the wet things are hung on the clothes' lines between the masts to dry, and the men, dressed in clean trousers and duck frocks, are assembled at their guns for muster, as soberly and sedately as if nothing had happened to discompose the decorous propriety of the ship's discipline. The mid-dies, in like manner, may safely be allowed to have their own share of this rough fun, provided they keep as clear of their immediate superiors as the ship's company keep clear of the young gentlemen. And I must do the population of the cockpit the justice to say, that when they fairly set about it, maugre their gentlemanlike habits, aristocratical sprinklings, and the march of intellect to boot, they do contrive to come pretty near to the honest folks before the mast in the article of ingenious ferocity. The captain, of course, and, generally speaking, all the officers, keep quite aloof, pocketing up their dignity with vast care, and ready, at a

moment's warning, to repress any undue familiarity. As things proceed, however, one or two of the officers may possibly become so much interested in the skylarking scenes going forward, as to approach a little too near, and laugh a little too loud, consistently with the preservation of the dignity of which they were so uncommonly chary at first starting. It cannot be expected, and indeed is not required, that the chief actors in these wild gambols, stripped to the buff, and shying buckets of water at one another, should be confined within very narrow limits in their game. Accordingly, some mount the rigging to shower down their cascades, while others squirt the fire engine from unseen corners upon the head of the unsuspecting passenger. And if it so chances (I say chances) that any one of the 'commissioned knobs' of the ship shall come in the way of these explosions, it is served out to him like a thunder-storm—'all accidentally,' of course. Well; what is he to do? He feels that he has indiscreetly trusted himself too far; and even if he has not actually passed the prescribed

line, still he was much too near it, and the offence is perhaps unintentional. At all events, it is of too trifling a nature; and, under the peculiar circumstances of the moment, to make a complaint to the captain would be ridiculous. Having, therefore, got his jacket well wet, and seeing the ready means of revenging himself in kind, he snatches up a bucket, and, forgetting his dignity, hurls the contents in the face of the mid who had given him a sousing but two seconds before! From that moment his commission goes for nothing, and he becomes, for the time being, one of the biggest Billy-boys amongst them. The captain, observing him in this mess, shrugs his shoulders, walks aft, muttering, "It's all your own fault, Mr. Hail-top; you've put yourself amongst these mad younkers; see how they'll handle you!"

Nothing, I confess, now looks to me more completely out of character with our well-starched discipline than a 'staid lieutenant' romping about the booms, skulking up the rigging, blowing the grampus, and having it blown upon him by a parcel

of rattle-pated reefers. But I remember well in the Volage being myself so gradually seduced by this animating spectacle of fun, that, before I knew where I was, I had crossed the rope laid on the deck as a boundary between order and disorder, and received a bucket of cold water in each ear, while the spout of a fire-engine, at the distance of two feet, was playing full in my eyes. On turning my head round to escape these cataracts, and to draw breath, a tar-brush was rammed half-way down my throat!

Far different was the scene, and very different, of course, my deportment, four or five years afterwards on the same spot, when, instead of being the junior lieutenant, I was the great gun of all, the mighty master-knob of the whole party — that is to say, the captain himself. I was then in command of the *Lyra*, a 10-gun sloop-of-war; and after the shaving operations were over, and all things put once more in order, I went on board the *Alceste* frigate to dine with my excellent friend and commanding officer, the late Sir Murray Maxwell. Lord Amherst, the ambassador

to China, was on board, and in great glee with the sight of what had been enacted before him ; for although, as I have always said, these scenes are not of a nature to bear agreeable description, they certainly are amusing enough to see—for once.

We soon sat down to dinner ; and there was, of course, a great deal of amusement in telling the anecdotes of the day, and describing Father Neptune's strange aspect, and his still stranger-looking family and attendants. I ventured to back one of my figures against all or any of theirs, if not for monstrosity, at least for interest of another kind. Our dripping Neptune in the *Lyra* was accompanied, as usual, by a huge she-monster representing *Amphitrite*, being no other than one of the boatswain's mates dressed up with the main-hatchway tarpaulin for a cloak, the jolly-boat's mizen for a petticoat, while two half-wet swabs furnished her lubberly head with ringlets. By her side sat a youth, her only son *Triton*, a morsel of submarine domestic history ascertained by reference previously made to *Lempriere's Dictionary*. This poor little fellow was a

great pet amongst the crew of the brig, and was indeed suspected to be entitled by birth to a rank above his present station — so gentle and gentlemanlike he always appeared. Even on this occasion, when disfigured by paint, pitch, and tar, copiously daubed over his delicate person to render him fit company for his papa old Neptune, he still looked as if his ill-favoured parents had stolen him, and were trying in vain to disguise their roguery by rigging him up in their own gipsy apparel.

It was very nearly dark when I rowed back to the *Lyra*, which had been hanging for the last half hour on the frigate's weather-quarter, at the distance of a cable's length, watching for my return. The wind was so light, and the brig so close, that no signal was made to heave to ; indeed I had scarcely rowed under the *Alceste's* stern, on my way back, before it was necessary to call out, " In bow !" The rattle of the oar on the thwarts gave the earliest notice of my approach to the people on board the little vessel, and I could hear the first lieute-

nant exclaim in haste, "Attend the side! Where are the side's-men?"

Scarcely had these words been spoken, when I heard a splash in the water, followed by a faint cry of distress and despair. In the next instant the brig was hove about, and the stern-boat lowered down, accompanied by all the hurried symptoms of a man having fallen overboard. I made the people in the boat tug at their oars towards the spot; but though we pulled over and over the ship's wake twenty times, the water was every where unruffled and unmarked by any speck. At length I rowed on board, turned the hands up to muster, to ascertain who was gone, and found all present but our poor little Triton! It appeared that the lad, who was one of the side's-men, fatigued with the day's amusement, had stretched himself in the forepart of the quarter-deck hammock-netting and gone to sleep. The sharp voice of the officer, on seeing the gig almost alongside, had roused the unhappy boy too suddenly; he quite forgot where he was, and, instead of jumping in-board, plunged into the sea, never to rise again!

There are few accidents more frequent at sea than that of a man falling overboard ; and yet, strange to say, whenever it happens, it takes every one as completely by surprise as if such a thing had never occurred before. What is still more unaccountable, and, I must say, altogether inexcusable, is the fact of such an incident invariably exciting a certain degree of confusion, even in well-regulated ships. If this evil be remediable, it is really very curious that such a reproach should be allowed to continue, in the midst of a system of discipline so exact as that of the Navy, in which almost every other contingency is foreseen and carefully provided for ; and it is highly reprehensible, to say the least of it, because it leads to the unnecessary loss of many lives. If the state of confusion, doubt, and alarm, which generally takes place, especially at night, when a man falls overboard, were the necessary consequence of the accident, we should merely lament it as an additional source of regret, and only consider a sea life still more dangerous than it is generally reckoned to be. In point of fact, however, there seems

to be no technical and inevitable necessity whatever for the occurrence of this disorder; and if the remedy be quite within the reach of ordinary discipline, it can hardly be denied, I should conceive, that an officer who neglects to make such application of the means in his power, has the life of any man to answer for, who falls overboard and is drowned; that is to say, if his loss can be traced less to the accident itself than to the want of some previously established and systematic arrangement suited to the peculiarities of an occurrence of such frequency.

After all that has been said of the exact nature of a man-of-war's discipline, and the degree of foresight, preparation, and habits of resource, which enable officers to act promptly and vigorously in the midst of difficulties, it is truly wonderful to see men of experience so completely at a loss as the oldest officers sometimes are, when the cry is given that a man is overboard. I have beheld brave and skilful men, who could face, unmoved, any other sort of danger, stand quite aghast on such occasions, and seem to lose all their facul-

ties just at the moment of greatest need. But although it be difficult to explain this, it is quite easy to understand how the ship's company should be thrown into confusion at such moments, if their officers are at a loss. Whenever I have witnessed the tumultuous rush of the people from below, their eagerness to crowd into the boats, and the reckless devotion with which they fling themselves into the water to save their companions, I could not help thinking that it was no small disgrace to us, to whose hands the whole arrangements of discipline are confided, that we had not yet fallen upon any method of availing ourselves to good purpose of so much generous activity.

Sailors are men of rough habits, but their feelings are not by any means so coarse ; and if they possess little prudence or worldly consideration, they are likewise very free from selfishness ; generally speaking, too, they are much attached to one another, and will make great sacrifices to their messmates or shipmates when opportunities occur. A very little address on the part of the officers, as I have before

hinted, will secure an extension of these kindly sentiments to the quarter-deck. But what I was alluding to just now was the cordiality of the friendships which spring up between the sailors themselves, who, it must be recollected, have no other society, and all, or almost all, whose ordinary social ties have been broken across either by the chances of war, or by the stern decrees which, I fear, will always render impressment absolutely unavoidable, or by the very nature of their roving and desultory life, which carries them they really know not where, and care not wherefore.

I remember once, when cruising off Terceira in the *Endymion*, that a man fell overboard and was drowned. After the usual confusion, and long search in vain, the boats were hoisted up, and the hands called to make sail. I was officer of the forecastle, and on looking about to see if all the men were at their stations, missed one of the foretop-men. Just at that moment I observed some one curled up, and apparently hiding himself under the bow of the barge, between the boat and the booms. “Hillo!” I said, “who are you?”

What are you doing here, you skulker? Why are you not at your station?"

"I am not skulking, sir," said the poor fellow, the furrows in whose bronzed and weather-beaten cheek were running down with tears. The man we had just lost had been his messmate and friend, he told me, for ten years. I begged his pardon, in full sincerity, for having used such harsh words to him at such a moment, and bid him go below to his birth for the rest of the day.

"Never mind, sir, never mind," said the kind-hearted seaman, "it can't be helped. You meant no harm, sir. I am as well on deck as below. Bill's gone, sir, but I must do my duty."

So saying, he drew the sleeve of his jacket twice or thrice across his eyes, and mustering his grief within his breast, walked to his station as if nothing had happened.

In the same ship, and nearly about the same time, the people were bathing alongside in a calm at sea. It is customary on such occasions to spread a studding-sail on the water, by means of lines from the

fore and main yard-arms, for the use of those who either cannot swim, or who are not expert in this art, so very important to all seafaring people. Half-a-dozen of the ship's boys, youngsters sent on board by that admirable and most patriotic of naval institutions the Marine Society, were floundering about in the sail, and sometimes even venturing beyond the leech rope. One of the least of these urchins, but not the least courageous of their number, when taunted by his more skilful companions with being afraid, struck out boldly beyond the prescribed bounds. He had not gone much further than his own length, however, along the surface of the fathomless sea, when his heart failed him, poor little man! and along with his confidence away also went his power of keeping his head above water. So down he sank rapidly, to the speechless horror of the other boys, who, of course, could lend the drowning child no help.

The captain of the forecastle, a tall, fine-looking, hard-a-weather fellow, was standing on the shank of the sheet anchor with his arms across, and his well-var-

nished canvass hat drawn so much over his eyes that it was difficult to tell whether he was awake, or merely dozing in the sun, as he leaned his back against the fore-topmast backstay. The seaman, however, had been attentively watching the young party all the time, and rather fearing that mischief might ensue from their rashness, he had grunted out a warning to them from time to time, to which they paid no sort of attention. At last he desisted, saying they might drown themselves if they had a mind, for never a bit would he help them ; but no sooner did the sinking figure of the adventurous little boy catch his eye, than, diver-fashion, he joined the palms of his hands over his head, inverted his position in one instant, and urging himself into swifter motion by a smart push with his feet against the anchor, shot head foremost into the water. The poor lad sank so rapidly that he was at least a couple of fathoms under the surface before he was arrested by the grip of the sailor, who soon rose again, bearing the bewildered boy in his hand, and, calling to the other youngsters to take

better care of their companion, chucked him right into the belly of the sail in the midst of the party. The fore-sheet was hanging in the calm, nearly into the water, and by it the dripping seaman scrambled up again to his old birth on the anchor, shook himself like a great Newfoundland dog, and then, jumping on the deck, proceeded across the forecastle to shift himself.

At the top of the ladder he was stopped by the marine officer, who had witnessed the whole transaction, as he sat across the gangway hammocks, watching the swimmers, and trying to get his own consent to undergo the labour of undressing and dressing. Said the soldier to the sailor, "That was very well done of you, my man, and right well deserves a glass of grog. Say so to the gun-room steward as you pass; and tell him it is my orders to fill you out a stiff norwester."

The soldier's offer was kindly meant, but rather clumsily timed, at least so thought Jack; for though he inclined his head in acknowledgment of the attention, and instinctively touched his hat,

when spoken to by an officer, he made no reply, till out of the marine's hearing, when he laughed, or rather chuckled out to the people near him, "Does the good gentleman suppose I'll take a glass of grog for saving a boy's life?"

It is surely very odd that there should ever be such a thing as a sailor who cannot swim. And it is still more marvellous that there should be found people who actually maintain that a sailor who cannot swim has a better chance than one who can. This is really a paradox so outrageous, that, on writing it down, I feel almost humiliated to think how often I have heard it maintained by officers in whose hands the country has intrusted many valuable lives. This strange doctrine, as may well be supposed, derives but slender support from any well-established facts. It is merely asserted that, on some occasions of shipwreck, the boldest swimmers have been lost in trying to reach the shore, when they might have been saved had they staid by the ship. This may be true enough in particular cases, and yet the general position ground-

ed upon it utterly absurd. The most skilful horsemen sometimes break their necks, but this is hardly adduced as an argument against learning to ride.

Without, however, discussing such nonsensical points, it cannot surely be denied by any rational person, that the art of swimming must be of great value to every man who lives on the water, and who is liable at any moment to tumble overboard, to be upset in a boat, or to be placed in situations where, but for this power, he might perish of want or cold ; or, which is more important still, he might be unable to save others from such a fate. Obvious though all this be, but little pains are generally taken by captains to see that their people learn to swim. I suppose there is not an officer in the service, certainly not one who has reached the rank just named, who has not seen many men drowned, solely from not being able to swim ; that is, because they had not learned a very simple art, of which, under his official injunctions, and aided by due encouragement, they might readily have acquired a sufficient knowledge. My own

conscience, I am much ashamed to say, is not quite clear on this score, whatever that of my brother-officers may be ; and certainly, when I again take the command of a ship, I shall use every exertion, and take advantage of every opportunity, at sea or in harbour, to encourage the men and officers to acquire this invaluable accomplishment. Would it be unreasonable to refuse the rating of A. B. (able seaman) on the ship's books to any man who could not swim ? If it be our duty to ascertain that a sailor can ' hand, reef, and steer,' before we place against his name these mystical letters, might we not well super-add, as a qualification, that he should also be able to keep his head above water, in the event of falling overboard, or that he should have it in his power to save another's life, if required to leap into the sea for that purpose by the orders of his superior ? At present, in such an emergency, an officer has to ask amongst a dozen persons, " Which of you can swim ? " instead of saying to the one nearest him, " Jump overboard after that man who is sinking ! "

This, then, seems the first material step in the establishment of an improved system in that branch of seamanship which relates to picking up men who fall overboard. I call it the first step, because it will obviously have a direct tendency to lessen the horror and alarm which such an accident must ever excite, and which nothing can ever quite remove, even were that desirable. There can be no doubt, indeed, that highly excited feelings always stand in the way of exact discipline, and especially of that prompt, hearty, and thoroughly confiding obedience to the officer under whose orders we are serving. Such obedience is necessary on this occasion, above all others, (except, perhaps, that of the ship being on fire), and is essentially required, in order to accomplish the purpose in view.

Different officers will, of course, devise different plans for the accomplishment of the same end. But I should expect all reflecting persons to agree in one or two points ; such, for instance, as the following :—that every officer, man, and boy on board should be perfectly aware before-

hand of what his particular duty is when the alarm of a man being overboard is given ; — that he should know precisely not only where to go, but what to do, when he reaches his station ; — and, above all, that he should not presume to exceed the measure of his appointed duty, unless expressly ordered by his superior. Every one who has been exposed to the misery of seeing a man fall overboard must remember that by far the greatest difficulty was to keep people back, there being always ten times as many persons as are required, not only ready, but eager to place themselves in the situations of greatest risk. In executing the duties of a ship-of-war, there should never be any volunteering allowed, either on this, or on any other occasion. Every man ought to have a specific duty, or a set of duties, to perform at all times. But these duties, in the case of a man falling overboard, must, of course, vary with the hour of the day or night, with the circumstance of its being the starboard or the larboard watch on deck, with the weather being fine or tempestuous, or with the course the ship

is steering relatively to the wind, the quantity of sail, and so on. All these varieties, therefore, ought, as far as possible, to be the subject of distinct and repeated explanation. That is to say, the crew of every ship should be exercised or drilled, if not as frequently, at least as specifically, in the methods of picking up a man, as they are trained in the exercise of the great guns and small arms, or in that of reefing topsails.

I hope I shall not be misunderstood as laying down any scale of comparison between the importance of these different exercises; but I feel well assured that every experienced officer will agree with me, that by no other method except carefully stationing the men, and now and then practising them at those stations, can we ever hope to prevent the disgraceful confusion and noise which at present almost always take place when a man falls overboard. Whatever be the nature of the proposed exercise, the people should never be taken by surprise, or cheated into the belief that a man really has fallen into the water; for the feelings which such an

incident excites are not of a description to be trifled with. Notice, indeed, should be formally given that no false alarm will ever be sounded; but when it is determined to go through the manœuvre in question, intimation may usefully be circulated before hand, that at such and such hours it will be practised, or a peculiar pipe by the boatswain might prepare the people for the evolution. When all was ready, something might be dropped overboard on purpose, and the exercise would then commence. At first, there would probably be no small degree of confusion and loss of time; but, surely, this would afford the most forcible practical evidence of the necessity of such drilling. When, by sufficient practice, the people had been rendered tolerably familiar with their duty in the day-time, or in fine weather, it might be then tried at night, or in a gale of wind. If they learned quickly all that was right to be done, there would be little trouble, and no great loss of time; but if, on the contrary, it cost much pains and a considerable interval to teach them how to conduct themselves to the best purpose,

under the supposed circumstances, that would only shew how much more necessary these precautions really were than officers generally suppose them to be.

Having said thus much to expose the evil, and to allude in general terms to the remedy, I feel bound to contribute likewise, as far as I am able, towards the practical details of the subject. I shall do so, however, with the most sincere diffidence; for the truth is, I have not studied so much as, perhaps, I ought to have done, what is called the seamanship part of my profession, but have, I fear, allowed both its scientific and more popular branches to engage a disproportionate share of my attention.

Every one who has been much at sea must remember the peculiar sounds which pervade a ship when a man is known to have fallen overboard. The course steered is so suddenly altered, that as she rounds to, the effect of the sails is doubled; the creaking of the tiller ropes and rudder next strike the ear; then follows the pitter-patter of several hundred feet in rapid motion, producing a singular tremor,

fore and aft. In the midst of these ominous but too well understood noises may be heard over all the shrill startling voice of the officer of the watch, generally betraying in its tone more or less uncertainty of purpose. Then we discover the violent flapping of the sails, and the mingled cries of "Clear away the boats!" "Is the life-buoy gone?" "Heave that grating after him!" "Throw that hen-coop over the stern!" "Who is it, do you know?" "Where did he fall from?" "Can he swim?" "Silence!" An impetuous, and too often an ill-regulated rush now succeeds to gain the boats, which are generally so crowded, that it becomes dangerous to lower them down, and more time is lost in getting the people out again than would have manned them twice over, if any regular system had been prepared, and rendered familiar and easy by practice beforehand.

I could give a pretty long list of cases which I have myself seen, or have heard others relate, where men have been drowned while their shipmates were thus struggling on board who should be first to save them,

and instead of aiding so laudable a cause, were actually impeding one another by their hurry-scurry and general ignorance of what really ought to be done. I remember, for example, hearing of a line-of-battle ship, in the Baltic, from which two men fell one evening, when the ship's company were at quarters. The weather was fine, the water smooth, and the ship going about seven knots. The two lads in question, who were furling the fore-royal at the time, lost their hold, and were jerked far in the sea. At least a dozen men, leaving their guns, leaped overboard from different parts of the ship, some dressed as they were, and others stripped. Of course, the ship was in a wretched state of discipline where such frantic proceedings could take place. The confusion soon became worse confounded ; but the ship was hove aback, and several boats lowered down. Had it not been smooth water, daylight, and fine weather, many of these absurd volunteers must have perished. I call them absurd, because there is no sense in merely incurring a great hazard, without some useful purpose to guide the exercise

of courage. Now, these intrepid fellows merely knew that a man had fallen overboard, and that was all; so away they leaped out of the ports and over the hammock-nettings, without knowing whereabouts the object of their quixotic heroism might be. The boats were obliged to pick up the first that presented themselves, for they were all in a drowning condition; but the two unhappy men who had been flung from aloft, being furthest off, went to the bottom before their turn came. Whereas, had their undisciplined shipmates not officiously and most improperly gone into the water, the boats would have been at liberty to row towards the men who had fallen accidentally, both of whom, in that case, might to all appearance have been saved.

I remember a bitter kind of story which was current in the Navy when I first entered it, nearly thirty years ago. In those days, naval punishments were not only more severe than they now are, but they were inflicted with less solemnity than is at present deemed essential to their salutary effect. In a frigate, commanded by a

well-known Tartar, as the martinets of the service are generally denominated, one of the crew, I forget from what cause, took it in his head to jump overboard, for the purpose of drowning himself. When he began to sink, he discovered that a salt-water death was not quite so agreeable as he had reckoned upon ; so he sung out lustily for a rope. The ship being brought to the wind, the man was picked up, with some difficulty. The matter was investigated instantly ; and as soon as it appeared that he had gone overboard intentionally, the hands were turned up, the gangway rigged, and the offender seized up. “ Now,” said the captain, “ I shall punish you under the sixteenth article of war, which is as follows :— ‘ Every person in or belonging to the fleet, who shall desert, shall suffer death, or such other punishment as the circumstances of the case shall deserve.’ ” And then, turning to the boatswain, he said, “ You will punish this man for desertion, or, which is exactly the same thing, for going out of the ship without leave.”

“ Now, sir,” resumed the captain to the

trembling culprit, “if you have any longer a desire to go overboard, you have only to ask the first lieutenant’s leave. He has my instructions to grant you permission; while I shall take very good care that you are not again picked up.”

I shall not stop to consider whether this gangway levity is the very best preventive of nautical suicide; but I am quite sure that there can be no offence more deserving of punishment, as a matter of discipline, and in order to prevent its recurrence, than the practice of leaping overboard after a man who has fallen into the water. There are cases, no doubt, in which it would be a positive crime in a swimmer not to spring, without waiting for orders, to the rescue of a fellow-creature whom he sees sinking in the waves, at whatever hazard to himself or to others; but I speak of that senseless, blindfold style in which I have very often witnessed men pitch themselves into the water, without knowing where the person who had fallen overboard was likely to be found.

Even in highly-disciplined ships this will sometimes take place; and the bad-

ness of the weather, darkness of the night, or other circumstances which increase the danger, seem only to stimulate the boldest spirits to brave the risk. I conceive there is no method of putting a stop to the practice but by positively enjoining the people not to go overboard, unless expressly ordered; and by explaining to them, on every occasion when the ship's company are exercised for this purpose, that the difficulty of picking a man up is generally much augmented by such indiscreet zeal.

I was lately told of some incidents which occurred in a frigate off Cape Horn, in a gale of wind, under close-reefed maintopsail and storm-staysails. At half-past twelve at noon, when the people were at dinner, a young lad was washed out of the lee fore-channels. The life-buoy was immediately let go, and the main-topsail laid to the mast. Before the jolly-boat could be lowered down, a man jumped overboard, as he said 'promiscuously,' for he never saw the boy at all, nor was ever within half a cable's length of the spot where he was floundering about. Al-

though the youth could not swim, he contrived to keep his head above water till the boat reached him, just as he was beginning to sink. The man who had jumped into the sea was right glad to give up his 'promiscuous' search, and to make for the life-buoy, upon which he perched himself, and stood shivering for half an hour, like a shag on the Mewstone, till the boat came to his relief.

At four o'clock of the same day, a man fell from the rigging; the usual alarm and rush took place, the lee-quarter boat was so crowded, that one of the topping-lifts gave way, the davit broke, and the cutter, now suspended by one tackle, soon knocked herself to pieces against the ship's side. Of course, the people in her were jerked out very quickly, so that, instead of there being only one man in the water, there were nearly a dozen swimming about. More care was taken in hoisting out another boat, and, strange to say, all the people were picked up, except the original unfortunate man, who, but for the accident, which might and ought to have been prevented, would in all proba-

bility have been saved. Neither he nor the life-buoy, however, could be discovered before the night closed; and it is most distressing to think, that, perhaps, he may have succeeded in reaching this support only to perish before the long winter night of those dreary regions could be one quarter over!

The life-buoy at present in use on board His Majesty's ships, and, I suppose, in all Indiamen, as well as, I trust, in most merchant ships, has an admirable contrivance connected with it, which has saved many lives, when otherwise there would hardly have been a chance of the men being rescued from a watery grave.

This life-buoy, which is the invention of Lieutenant Cook of the Navy, consists of two hollow copper vessels connected together, each about as large as an ordinary-sized pillow, and of buoyancy and capacity sufficient to support one man standing upon them. Should there be more than one person requiring support, they can lay hold of rope beackets fitted to the buoy, and so sustain themselves. Between the two copper vessels there stands

up a hollow pole, or mast, into which is inserted, from below, an iron rod, whose lower extremity is loaded with lead, in such a manner, that when the buoy is let go, the iron rod slips down to a certain extent, lengthens the lever, and enables the lead at the end to act as ballast. By this means the mast is kept upright, and the buoy prevented from upsetting. The weight at the end of the rod is arranged so as to afford secure footing for two persons, should that number reach it; and there are also, as I said before, large rope beackets through which others can thrust their head and shoulders, till assistance is rendered.

On the top of the mast is fixed a port-fire, calculated to burn, I think, twenty minutes, or half an hour; this is ignited most ingeniously by the same process which lets the buoy fall into the water. So that a man falling overboard at night, is directed to the buoy by the blaze on the top of its pole or mast, and the boat sent to rescue him also knows in what direction to pull. Even supposing, however, the man not to have gained the life-buoy, it

is clear that, if above the surface at all, he must be somewhere in that neighbourhood ; and if he shall have gone down, it is still some satisfaction, by recovering the buoy, to ascertain that the poor wretch is not left to perish by inches.

The method by which this excellent invention is attached to the ship, and dropped into the water in a single instant, is, perhaps, not the least ingenious part of the contrivance. The buoy is generally fixed amidships over the stern, where it is held securely in its place by being strung, or threaded, as it were, on two strong perpendicular iron rods fixed to the taff-rail, and inserted in holes piercing the framework of the buoy. The apparatus is kept in its place by what is called a slip-stopper, a sort of catch-bolt or detent, which can be unlocked at pleasure, by merely pulling a trigger. Upon withdrawing the stopper the whole machine slips along the rods, and falls at once into the ship's wake. The trigger, which unlocks the slip-stopper, is furnished with a lanyard, passing through a hole in the stern, and having at its inner end a large knob,

marked “ Life-Buoy ; ” this alone is used in the daytime. Close at hand is another wooden knob, marked “ Lock,” fastened to the end of a line fixed to the trigger of a gun-lock primed with powder ; and so arranged, that when the line is pulled, the port-fire is instantly ignited, while, at the same moment, the life-buoy descends, and floats merrily away, blazing like a lighthouse. It would surely be an improvement to have both these operations always performed simultaneously, that is, by one pull of the string. The port-fire would thus be lighted in every case of letting go the buoy ; and I suspect the smoke in the daytime would often be as useful in guiding the boat, as the blaze always is at night.

The gunner who has charge of the life-buoy lock sees it freshly and carefully primed every evening at quarters, of which he makes a report to the captain. In the morning the priming is taken out, and the lock uncocked. During the night a man is always stationed at this part of the ship, and every half hour, when the bell strikes, he calls out “ Life-buoy ! ” to shew that he is awake, and at his post, exactly in

the same manner as the look-out-men abaft, on the beam, and forward, call out "Starboard quarter!" "Starboard gangway!" "Starboard bow!" and so on, completely round the ship, to prove that they are not napping.

After all, however, it must be owned, that some of the most important considerations, when a man falls overboard, have as yet scarcely been mentioned. These are,

First, the quickest and most effectual method of arresting the ship's progress, and how to keep her as near the spot where the man fell as possible.

Secondly, to preserve entire, during these evolutions, the general discipline of the ship, to maintain silence, and to enforce the most prompt obedience, without permitting fool-hardy volunteering of any kind.

Thirdly, to see that the boat appointed to be employed on these occasions is secured in such a manner that she may be cast loose in a moment, and, when ready for lowering down, that she is properly manned, and fitted, so as to be efficient in all respects when she reaches the water.

Fourthly, to take care in lowering the boat neither to stave nor to swamp her, nor to pitch the men out.

And, lastly, to have a sufficient number of the sharpest-sighted men in the ship stationed aloft in such a manner as to give them the best chance, not only of discovering the person who is overboard, but of pointing him out to the people in the boat, who may not otherwise know in what direction to pull.

It is conceived, that all these objects may be accomplished with very little, if any, additional trouble, in all tolerably well-disciplined ships.

Various opinions prevail amongst officers as to the first point; but, I think, the best authorities recommend that, if possible, the ship should not merely be hove aback when a man falls overboard, but that she ought to be brought completely round on the other tack. Of course, sail should be shortened in stays, and the main yard left square. This plan implies the ship being on a wind, or from that position to having the wind not above two points abaft the beam. But, on one tack

or the other, this will include a large portion of the sailing of every ship.

The great merit of such a method of proceeding is, that, if the evolution succeeds, the ship, when round, will drift right down towards the man. And, although there may be some small risk in lowering the boat in stays, from the ship having at one period stern way, there will, in fact, be little time lost if the boat be not lowered till the ship be well round, and the stern way at an end. There is more mischief done, generally, by lowering the boat too soon, than by waiting till the fittest moment arrives for doing it coolly. And it cannot be too often repeated, that almost the whole depends upon the self-possession of the officer of the watch. This important quality is best taught (like every thing else of the kind) by experience, that is to say, by a thorough and familiar practical knowledge of what is right to be done under all circumstances. It may be permitted for every other person in the ship to feel alarmed and shocked when the sounds reach his ears indicating that a man is overboard ; but the officer in com-

mand of the deck ought to let it be seen and felt, by his tone of voice, and by the judicious promptitude of his orders, that he, at least, is perfectly master of himself, and knows distinctly what course it is best to adopt.

If the ship be running before the wind, or be sailing large, and under a press of sail, the officer must exercise his judgment in rounding to, and take care, in his anxiety to save the man, not to let the masts go over the side, which will not advance, but defeat his object. If the topgallant-sheets, the topsail and topgallant-haulyards, be let fly, and the head-yards braced quickly up, the ship, when brought to the wind, will be nearly in the situation of reefing topsails. Under these circumstances, it will hardly be possible to bring her about, for, long before she can have come head to wind, her way will be so much deadened that the rudder may have ceased to act. Still, however, I am so strong an advocate for the principle of tacking, instead of merely lying-to, when a man is overboard, that, even under the circumstances above described, as soon as

the boat was lowered down and sent off, and the extra sail gathered in, I would fill, stand on till the ship had gained head-way enough to render the evolution certain, and then go about, so as to bring her head towards the boat. It must be recollected, that when a ship is going well off the wind in the manner here supposed, it is impossible to round her to so quickly as to replace her on the spot where the man fell; to reach which a great sweep must always be made. But there seems to me no doubt, that in every possible case, even when going right before it, the ship will always drift nearer and nearer to that spot, if eventually brought to the wind on the opposite tack from that on which she was luffed up.

It will conduce greatly to the success of these measures, if it be an established rule, that, whenever the alarm is given of a man being overboard, the people, without further orders, fly to their appointed stations for tacking ship; and that only those persons who shall be specifically selected to man and lower down the boats, and for other duties, shall presume to quit the

places assigned to them on going about. It so happens, that when the men are in their stations for tacking, they are almost equally in their stations for shortening sail, or for performing most other evolutions likely to become necessary at such moments.

The excepted men should consist of at least two boats' crews in each watch, and of others whose sole duty it should be to attend to the operation of lowering the boat or boats, into which no men but those expressly appointed should ever be allowed to enter. These persons, selected for their activity, strength, and coolness, should belong to the afterguard, main and mizen-top, and gunner's crew, men whose duties lie chiefly abaft or about the main-mast. Midshipmen in each watch should also be named to the different boats; and their orders ought to be positive, never to allow more than the proper crew to enter, nor on any account to permit the boat to be lowered till fully and properly manned. I grant that it requires no small nerve to sanction the delays which an attention to these minute

particulars demands. But the adequate degree of faith in their utility will bring with it the requisite share of decision, to possess which, under all circumstances, is, perhaps, one of the most characteristic distinctions of a good commanding officer.

I could give anecdotes by the dozen of the mischief arising from these precautions not being attended to. I was lately told of a good case in point. A line-of-battle ship, during the war, was lying at anchor off Oleron in a hard gale of wind. A cutter had been sent to the senior officer on some service, but, not being able to pull to windward, she returned. All the men were called out except four, and the boat hoisted up. Through some inattention on the part of the boatswain's mate not piping belay in time, or from the tackle-fall being worn out (a frequent but most inexcusable neglect), one of the falls gave way, just as the boat reached the davit. The consequence was, all the four men were precipitated overboard. The stern-boat was instantly lowered down, with a midshipman and four hands in her; but, owing to the want of some

efficient system being previously established to meet such cases, three out of this precious boat's crew of volunteers could not pull a stroke! Two of the men who had been pitched out of the cutter, accordingly, sunk before the boat could reach them, though she was not her own length from them. One man was pulled in, but the fourth could not be seen at all, and was supposed to have perished likewise. The men in the boat, not knowing how to use the oars, soon became terrified with their situation; and had it not been for the able assistance of the rescued man, though he was half drowned, and the activity of the young midshipman, the boat must soon have been swamped, and all hands in her have gone to the bottom. As it was, they contrived, by great exertion, to keep her head to the sea, and in the ship's wake, till a rope, with a buoy to it, was veered to them. On being pulled under the stern, and just as they were hooking the tackles which were to hoist them up, they discovered the fourth man who had fallen overboard from the cutter clinging to the rudder chains. The poor fellow

was almost exhausted, by being soused over head and ears every time the ship pitched. He was secured by the boat-hook, and pulled in, more dead than alive.

It is not enough that care is taken to prevent the boat being overcrowded, and that the crew which are to manage her know their business, or that an officer accustomed to command be in charge of her, and that she be deliberately lowered into the water by men who understand how to execute this rather difficult and delicate operation in bad weather; for there are still one or two apparently minor points which should not be neglected. The boat's plug, for example, ought in every case to be fastened to the bottom board with a stout lanyard. I have seen the want of this very small article, which might prove the loss of the whole boat's crew, cause the greatest trouble and danger.

Much of the man's chance of being picked up will depend, in the day-time at least, upon the goodness of the look-out for him which is kept, by persons properly stationed in the rigging and elsewhere.

At night, alas! the chances against the unhappy man are always greatly increased; and I shall never forget the melancholy which spreads instantaneously over the ship when the boat returns, and to the eager cry of "Have you got the man?" it is answered, "We could see nothing of him; we heard him splashing in the water and calling out for a rope, but before we could reach the spot he had sunk. Here is the poor fellow's hat, which we picked up just where we had heard the sound of his voice." When Lieutenant Cook's life-buoy is used, indeed, the chances of saving the man at night are much greater; but still it is, at best, but a fearful chance even for an expert swimmer.

There ought, in every ship, to be selected a certain number of the sharpest-sighted persons, who should be instructed, the instant the alarm is given, to repair to stations appointed for them aloft. Several of these ought to plant themselves in the lower rigging, some in the topmast shrouds, and one, if not two, might advantageously be perched on each of the cross-trees. These persons, whose exclu-

sive duty is to discover the man who is overboard, should be directed to look out, some in the ship's wake, some on either side of it, and to be particularly careful to mark the spot near which the ship must have been when he fell, in order that, when she comes about and drifts near the place, they may know where to direct their attention, and also to take care that the ship does not forge directly upon the object they are seeking for. The chief advantage of having look-out men stationed aloft in this manner consists in their commanding a far better position compared to that of persons on deck, and still better when compared to the people in the boat. Besides which, having this object alone to attend to, they are more likely to be successful. Moreover, from their being in considerable numbers, and scattered at different elevations, their chances are, of course, much increased of discovering so small an object as a man on the surface.

The people in the boat possess no such advantages, for they are occupied with their oars, and lose between the seas

all sight of the surrounding objects near them, while they can always see the ship's masts ; and as soon as they detect that any one of the look-out men sees the person who is overboard, and points in the proper direction for them to pull, they can shape their course accordingly. Presently another look-out, instructed by the first where to direct his eyes, also discovers the man ; then another sees him, then another, and so on, till all who are aloft obtain sight of the desired object, and join in pointing with their hands to where it is to be found. The officer in the boat, thus instructed by innumerable pointers, rows at once, and with confidence, in the proper direction, and the drowning man is often rescued from his deep-sea grave, when, had there been no such look-outs, or had they been fewer in number, or lower down, he must have perished.

I quite forget what officer it was who first told me of this plan, which, from frequent trial, I know to be most useful in practice. I shall certainly be most happy to publish the name of the inventor of this

ingenious idea if by any means I can recover it. The thing itself, I should imagine, requires only to be stated to insure its universal adoption. We wonder, indeed, how a measure of so much simplicity and obvious utility should not before have struck every one who has turned his attention to this subject;—and what commanding officer is there who has not? I shall be very glad to find myself mistaken in supposing that this plan is not as yet generally adopted; and I trust in no great length of time it will form, in every ship, an integral part of an organised and well-understood system of regulations, exclusively directed to the important purpose of saving the lives of men who fall overboard.

It is quite obvious, indeed, the greater the number of eyes that can be employed in search of such a speck as a man's head presents, the better chance there will be of discovering it; and accordingly, as many men as possible should always be sent aloft to look out in the first instance; not fewer in any case than six or eight to each mast. As soon as the ship is fairly

round, the sails trimmed, and the boat lowered down, at least the whole of one watch ought to be sent aloft, and scattered up and down the rigging, at the mast-heads, and on the yard-arms; for it is impossible to say from what spot the man can best be seen, or who shall be the fortunate individual to catch the first glimpse of him. I have even known a stupid, gummy-eyed fellow, who never before got credit for seeing much further than a mole, have the luck to discover a boy at a great distance, long before the others could distinguish any thing floating on the water.

It is curious to observe the electric sort of style in which the perception of an object, when once pointed out, flashes along from man to man. As each in succession catches sight of his shipmate, he exclaims, "There he is! there he is!" and holds out his hand in the proper direction for the guidance of the boat. Indeed, I have seldom witnessed a more interesting sight than that of eighty or a hundred persons, stationed aloft, straining their eyes to keep sight of a poor fellow

who is struggling for his life, and all eagerly extending their hands towards him, as if they could clutch him from the waves. To see these hands drop again is inexpressibly painful, from its indicating that the unfortunate man is no longer distinguishable. One by one the arms fall down, reluctantly, as if it were a signal that all hope was over. Presently the boat is observed to range about at random—the look-out men aloft, when repeatedly hailed and asked, “if they see any thing like him?” are all silent. Finally, the boat’s recall-flag is hoisted—sail is again made on the ship—the people are piped down—and this tragical little episode in the voyage being concluded, every thing goes on as before.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

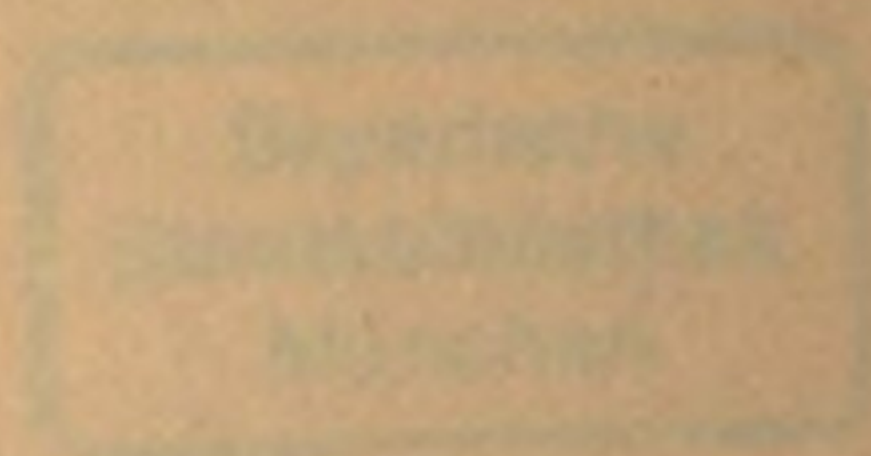
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and a moment later all eyes were turned
eagerly towards the mainmast
top, as if they would catch him from the
mast. To see their hands drop again was
exceedingly painful, from the knowledge
that the intention of man in the sky was
unmistakable. For the first time the
crew, reluctantly, as if it were a signal that
all hope was over. Presently the boat is
observed to range about at random -- the
look-out men aloft, when repeatedly hailed
and asked, "if they see any thing like
him?" are all silent. Finally, the boat
reappears in line -- and is again made
on the ship -- the people are piped down
-- and this singular little episode in the
story with years, jubilation gained again
on as before.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME



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